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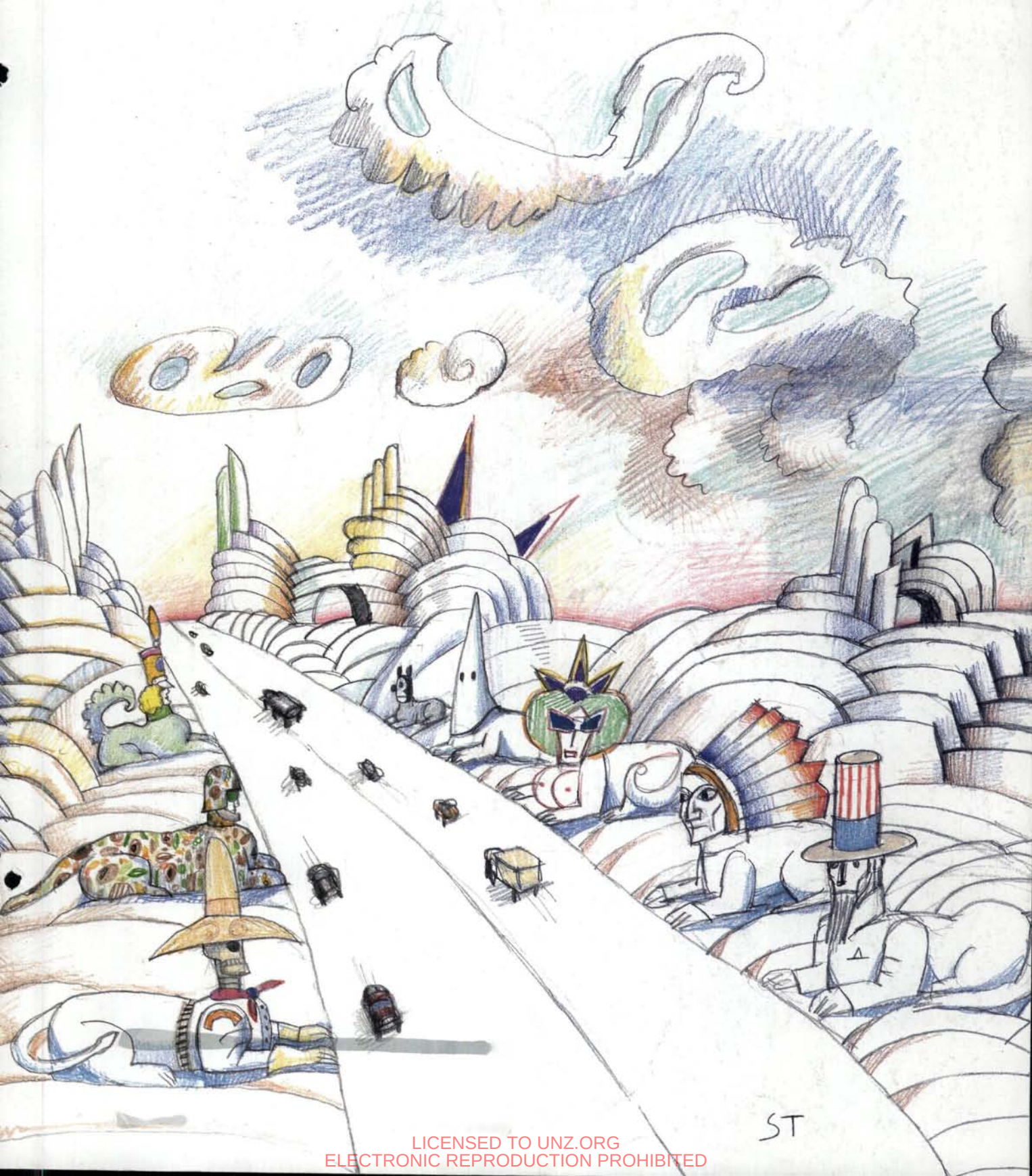

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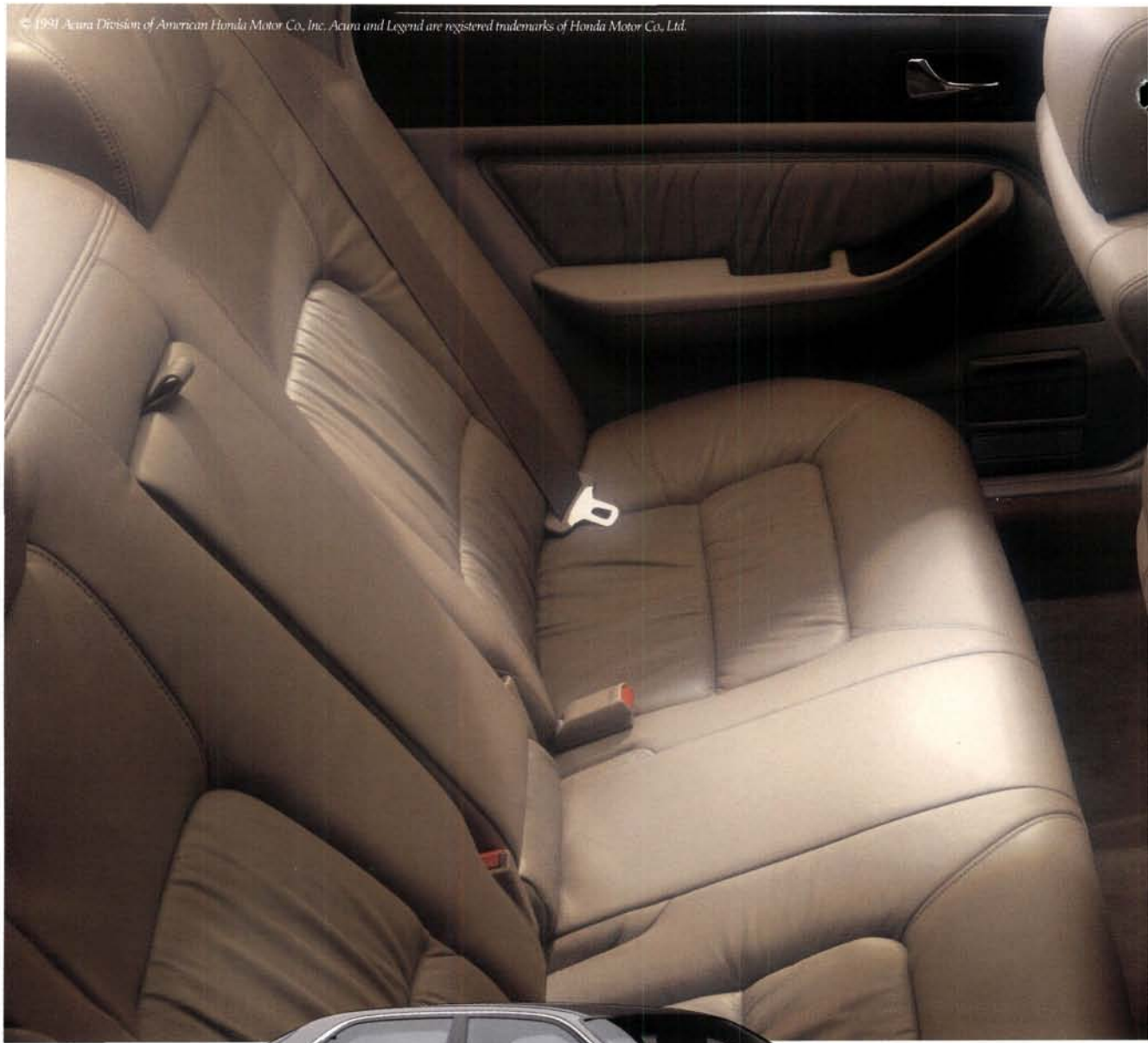

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

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TOP FORTY radio has long supplied the lovestruck with giddy confirmation of their feelings. It's been a while, however—if CDs based on current Broadway hits are any indication—since show lyrics reflected any truly adult version of contemporary romance. For example, anyone searching for clear expression of the way AIDS has blighted the romantic landscape would be hard pressed to find it listening to the ersatz lyrics of "Falsettos." Romance seekers can always retreat to an era when Broadway love affairs seemed carefree—they can listen to the Gershwin classics on the new recording of "Crazy for You." But that tactic can be unsatisfying, too: as performed by such pop-influenced singers as Jodi Benson, the love described here sounds hopelessly nostalgic, not resonant with The Way We Live Now.

When sung by a mature singer, of course, a Gershwin lyric can still sound perfectly up-to-date. On her recent CD, "Here's to Life," Shirley Horn takes the Gershwins' standard "Isn't It a Pity?" and flecks it with the darkest of colors: regret not only that the lovers have taken a lifetime to meet but that, despite their belated good fortune, they may not make it in the end. Singing the title cut, conversely, Miss Horn (who has a November booking at the Village Vanguard) is flush with confidence: "No complaints and no regrets," the song begins, "I still believe in chasing dreams and placing bets." Throughout the album, Miss Horn fights the odds against love's taking root among the ruins—amid acute ambivalence or recent grief or the beloved's refusal to believe in possibilities. She's also expert at conveying the unending inner interrogation that every romance involves, especially at the start, when insecurities dog every moment. And on "Where Do You Start?"—music by the album's producer, Johnny Mandel; words by Alan and Marilyn Bergman—Miss Horn sings of the emotions that threaten to erupt when an affair changes course. "Do you allow yourself a little time to cry?" she muses, voice ready to break, before deciding, it seems, to soldier on somehow: "Or do you close your eyes and kiss it all goodbye?"

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

BROTHER TRUCKERS—The Ridiculous Theatrical Company launches its new season with this gender-shuffling comedy by Georg Osterman. Previews begin Sept. 2. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Sq. 691-2271.)

OPENED RECENTLY

ALI—A play about the boxer, written by Graydon Royce and Geoffrey C. Ewing (who also has the title role). (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038. Closes Sept. 6.)

ANNA KARENINA—A musical by Peter Kellogg (book and lyrics) and Daniel Levine (score), which is based on Tolstoy's novel. Ann Crumb, Melissa Errico, Gregg Edelman, Scott Wentworth, John Cunningham, and Jerry Lanning lead the cast. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

Georg Osterman, Maureen Angelos, James Lamb, and Everett Quinton in "Brother Truckers"

THE BEST OF FORBIDDEN BROADWAY—This tenth-anniversary edition of Gerard Alessandrini's long-running, ever-fluctuating musical revue is, as one might expect, a treat. There is some new material, but our favorite sequences are still the spoof of "M. Butterfly" and the "Speed-the-Plow" number, "Madonna's Brain," in which David Mamet and Ron Silver try to teach Madonna to act and she ends up tearing off most of her clothes. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/4/92.) (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

CONVERSATIONS WITH MY FATHER—If you're looking for a totally satisfying theatrical experience, try the new Herb Gardner, a bittersweet memory play about a Lower East Side barkeep, his two sons, and the patrons of his tavern. As staged by Daniel Sullivan, with an ace cast led by the wonderful Judd Hirsch, the play does what "Jake's Women" and "Dancing at Lughnasa" would probably do if their authors were, respectively, more sophisticated and less sentimental. Grab this one. (4/13/92) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

CRAZY FOR YOU—Loosely based on "Girl Crazy," which opened in 1930, this glorious show is actually a celebration of the music of George Gershwin and the lyrics of his brother Ira—nineteen songs in all—and also of the witty, imaginative choreography of Susan Stroman. Ken Ludwig wrote the lively book. Harry Groener and Jodi Benson are the lead actor/dancers. The scenery is by Robin Wagner; the costumes are by William Ivey Long; and the masterly direction is by Mike Ockrent. Bless 'em all. (3/2/92) (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

DISTANT FIRES—A play by Kevin Heelan, which was seen last season at the Atlantic Theatre. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330.)

FALSETTOS—This back-to-back revival of "March of the Falsettos" and "Falsettoland," two of William Finn's three one-act musicals about a childish, self-absorbed man who leaves his wife and son for his not very nice male lover, is strictly for those who care. We've never understood the appeal of Mr. Finn's trilogy. It has a chronology as complicated as the Oedipus cycle and a dramatic sensibility akin to that of the Oresteia. To us, though, it has always seemed like banality set to music: shallow, unlikable people expressing themselves in shallow, unlikable songs. (5/11/92) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

FIVE GUYS NAMED MOE—The guys are black dancers and singers of ability and spirit, who perform the songs (either lyrics or music or both) of the late Louis Jordan, among them "Don't Let the Sun Catch You Crying," "Ain't Nobody Here but Us Chickens," and "Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby?" This London import makes a merry evening. (4/20/92) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

GUYS AND DOLLS—A lively production of Frank Loesser's perfect musical, under the direction of Jerry Zaks. Nathan Lane and Faith Prince are the leading guy and doll, and Tony Walton designed the stunning scenery. (4/27/92) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

JAKE'S WOMEN—Alan Alda is at his genial best in the new Neil Simon. The play, about an aging writer trying to come to terms with the women in his life, past and present, is pretty much what you'd expect: some funny lines and a lot of phony dialogue. It's predictable, banal, and contrived, but at least it showcases a fine cast of actresses that includes Kate Burton and Joyce Van Patten. (4/6/92) (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

JEAN COCTEAU REPERTORY—Two works in rotating repertory: **UNDER MILK WOOD**, by Dylan Thomas, and **AN OLD ACTRESS IN THE ROLE OF DOSTOEVSKY'S WIFE**, by the Russian playwright Edvard Radzinsky. Alma H. Law translated the Radzinsky work. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

JELLY'S LAST JAM—The music of Jelly Roll Morton, self-proclaimed inventor of jazz, and, at the same time, an unsparing delineation of Morton himself. The show, an original if ever there was one, was written and directed by George C. Wolfe. In the starring role, Gregory Hines combines his astonishing talents as tap dancer and actor; Savion Glover, who plays the character as a young man, is worthy of him, which is saying a lot. Also present are Keith David, Tonya Pinkins, Wayne Mathis, and Mary Bond Davis. Luther Henderson has adapted Morton's music and offered some music of his own; the lyrics were written by Susan Birkenhead; and Hope Clark was the choreographer. (5/11/92) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

LOTTO (EXPERIENCE THE DREAM)—A comedy by Cliff Roquemore. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 505-9251.)

MARVIN'S ROOM—A play about dying, suffering, and sacrifice in one family, written in a style so frisky as to set the teeth permanently on edge. There is a fine performance by Mark Rosenthal as a smoldering adolescent. Also with Alice Drummond, Laura Esterman, and Tim Monsion. Scott McPherson is the dramatist. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000. Closes Sept. 6.)

MURDER IN DISGUISE—A gay comedy mystery written by John Glines. John Carhart III, Sean Flanigan, John Jason, Wayne Markover, Steve Silver, and Philip Stoehr make up the cast. Pip Carpenter was the director. (Courtyard Playhouse, 39 Grove St., at Bleecker St. 564-8038.)

THE NIGHT LARRY KRAMER KISSED ME—A play written and performed by David Drake. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 564-8038.)

THE REAL INSPECTOR HOUND—Tom Stoppard has made parody an art form in this play about a pair of drama critics who attend and appraise a performance of a traditional, worn-out British thriller. The jokes come thick and fast, and the result is Christmas morning for connoisseurs of comedy. The Roundabout's production, under Gloria Muzio's direction, is very good; Simon Jones and David Healy are first-rate in the leading roles, and they are admirably supported by Patricia Conolly, J. Smith-Cameron, Jane Summerhays, and Jeff Weiss, among others. "The Fifteen Minute Hamlet," performed as a prologue, is exactly what it sounds

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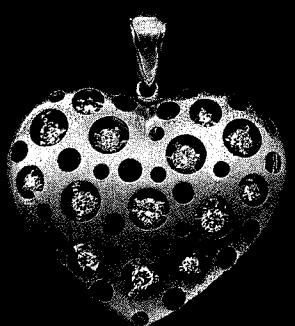

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THE THEATRE–Cont'd

like—a breakneck anthology of Gems From. *Same director, same company, many laughs.* (8/31/92) (Criterion Center, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

RUTHLESS!—This camp musical about a monster child star is harmless and amusing enough—assuming you can stomach the little girl. She gave us the pip. (Players, 115 Macdougal St. 254-5076.)

SIGHT UNSEEN—Donald Margulies' engrossing new play, which is about an Eric Fischl-type painter who decides to look up an old girlfriend he once treated badly, takes the contemporary art scene to task. Technically, it also plays around with time a good deal, though never sloppily or gratuitously. You end up being affected by a curious kind of resonance—it's earned, not something you've brought with you into the theatre. With Adam Arkin, Margaret Colin, John Christopher Jones, and Pamela Gray. (2/3/92) (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477. Closes Sept. 6.)

THE TEMPEST—The group called A Matinée Idyll presents free performances of Shakespeare's play in three outdoor locations. (Sept. 3 and Sept. 6 at the Soldiers and Sailors Monument, Riverside Park at W. 89th St; Sept. 4 at Belvedere Castle, Central Park; and Sept. 5 in Carl Schurz Park, East End Ave. and 86th St. Performances start at 6.)

LONG RUNS

BEAU JEST: A comedy by James Sherman. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)... **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.)... **CATSKILLS ON BROADWAY:** A festival of ethnicity and all but unbroken laughter. Freddie Roman and Mal Z. Lawrence are the Jewish comedians; Dick Capri handles the Italians; and Louise DuArt does impressions. The jokes explode around us, and there isn't a dud in the lot. (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)... **DANCING AT LUGHNASA:** How you respond to Brian Friel's wistful autobiographical play depends a good deal on your personality and preoccupations. Either you will find it lovely and lyrical or it will strike you as the memory play from Hell. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)... **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run recently celebrated its thirty-second birthday. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.)... **FOREVER PLAID:** Stuart Ross's loving tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. Bring your mom. Hell, bring the whole family. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.)... **LOST IN YONKERS:** This family melodrama by Neil Simon, set in Yonkers during the Second World War, is about what happens when a cowering, pathetic man has to leave his two adolescent sons with his intimidating mother for the better part of a year. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.)... **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)... **MISS SAIGON:** Oh, the horror! The horror! (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.)... **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.)... **PERFECT CRIME:** A murder mystery by Warren Manzi. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 695-3401.)... **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** This much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)... **THE SECRET GARDEN:** This lovely musical adaptation of the classic children's story by Frances Hodgson Burnett isn't just a kiddie show. Subtle, charming, intelligent, and wholly literary in its approach to adaptation, it manages both to be faithful to the spirit of the book and to comment on the particular moment in time that produced it. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)... **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** The never-ending nuptials of Anthony Angelo Nunzio and Valentina Lynne Vitale. With audience participation, as you probably know. (St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200.)... **TUBES:** A performance work by Blue Man Group about art and other matters. (Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.)... **THE WILL ROGERS FOLLIES:** The sets by Tony Walton, the direction and choreography by Tommy Tune, the costumes by Willa Kim, and the row upon row of Ziegfeld girls make a feast for the eyes, but the funny bone and heart are neglected. (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.)

DANCE

GREGORY HINES, appearing in "Jelly's Last Jam," and Brenda Bufalino, artistic director of the American Tap Dance Orchestra, recently conducted a public discussion on tap at the Woodpeckers Tap Dance Center, in SoHo. Here are some excerpts:

BRENDA BUFALINO: I remember Gregory once said, at a conference in Colorado, "We don't need any more time steps." Now, I'd been coming from a very different direction—bebop, lots of attention to phrasing—and I was seeing my dancers losing the pulse. My view was, "It's time to get *back* to time steps." This is an amazing moment [in tap], with four generations dancing at once, from Jimmy Slyde to Savion Glover.

GREGORY HINES: I emulated Honi Coles, Sandman Sims, Sammy Davis. When Savion Glover was fourteen, *he* looked up to Honi Coles and myself. The fourteen-year-old dancers now look up to Savion Glover. He's doing things nobody has done before. He's the Michael Jordan of his field.

MISS BUFALINO: I just got back from touring Eastern Europe, Cyprus, Israel, and Germany, and there are tap dancers everywhere. There are as many tap dancers performing in Germany on a professional level as in America.

MR. HINES: With tap dancing, you see it and you hear it, and sometimes it makes so much sense that it's just thrilling.

MISS BUFALINO: But, Gregory, how do we develop a vocabulary for what we see and hear?

MR. HINES: I think tap dancing is such an emotional thing that we all have the vocabulary within us. My chief frustration as an audience member is that, for the most part, tap dancing is not heard at the volume it needs. You talk about Honi Coles. If someone can't hear the subtleties... It's the tap dancer's lot to show up at any old floor, with the orchestra right behind. The traction of the floor immediately has an effect on the dancer. I've experimented with a lot of different space-age surfaces in an effort to circumvent wood, which is very heavy to transport. I've tried a lot of different miking systems—planted into the wood, on top of the wood. It takes a lot of smart planning to have a tap concert. Look, as an old lawyer friend once said to me, "Greg, it's not the money. It's the money."

PILAR RIOJA—Performing a program of Spanish classical dance and flamenco, including two premières. (Repertorio Español, Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. 889-2850. Sept. 1-5 and Sept. 9 at 8, and Sept. 6 at 3. Through Oct. 3.)

Herbie Mann at the Blue Note

NIGHT LIFE

WE'VE always found arena shows to be hit-and-miss propositions. Either we sway dreamily in place, watching the cigarette lighters glow like a great field of stars, or we spend two hours wondering how long it's going to take to get out of the parking lot. U2 recently brought its Zoo TV tour to Giants Stadium, in New Jersey. We went, we watched, and we worried about our car.

U2's live shows were once about earnestness. If you succumbed to the band's myth—and it was hard not to—you walked out of the stadium as if out of a cathedral. These days, the band's concerts are about artifice. They're about massive video screens, radio towers strung with lights, ten-gallon hats, and sparkling cowboy suits. U2 tired of their righteous reputation long ago, and they've been deconstructing themselves ever since, telling reporters that they're "chopping down 'The Joshua Tree.'" At Giants Stadium, Bono asked the crowd if they had come to New Jersey just to watch TV. The crowd indicated that they had not, at which point the video monitors flashed on and the band launched into "Even Better Than the Real Thing." U2 has a sense of humor now, and heaven help us.

To be fair, no band wants to be caught sitting still. But, at Giants Stadium, U2's attempt to be arch and postmodern came at the expense of their music, particularly the older material, which rang false in such a garish, high-tech setting. There was a nice acoustic segment and an oddly touching guest appearance by Lou Reed, who sang "Satellite of Love" with the band. For the most part, though, Bono and the boys seemed very small and very far away—they looked like inch-high rock stars worshipping at the altar of MTV. We wouldn't have believed it if we hadn't seen it ourself. Not long ago, Bono told a reporter, "There's a lot of bullshit in rock and roll, but some of the bullshit is pretty cool." Absolutely. But some of it's just bullshit.

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(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out some of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—On Sept. 8, the Oak Room awakens from its summer-long sleep with a performance by **susannah mc corkle,** a fine pop-jazz singer who has been known to root around in the archives for lost or forgotten songs. She'll be in residence here for the next month. Shows at nine-thirty Tuesdays through Thursdays, and at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Arthur's Tavern, 57 Grove St. (675-6879)—Thirty-year-olds in love call Mabel Godwin a *scandal.* Now in her seventies, she remains a singer of racy jazz numbers, a devout chatterer, a wearer of gold lamé suits, and a pianist who perks along quite nicely to the accompaniment of a snare and a standup bass. Ms. Godwin performs Fridays and Saturdays from nine-thirty. On Sundays, cornettist Lee Lorenz leads the Creole Cookin' Jazz Band, on Mondays the Grove Street Stompers do their Dixieland thing, and Tuesdays through Thursdays belong to Al Bundy. Arthur's is currently decorated for the holidays—Christmas, New Year's, Halloween, and St. Patrick's Day.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A sleek, green-walled room with brass railings and mounted O'Keeffian animal skulls. Look closer and you'll find that the skulls are wearing earrings. After the show, be sure to check out the adjoining restaurant/tapas bar, which looks like the indoor food market of your dreams. **lypsinka,** who finishes a run here on Sept. 6, at nine, is the creation of John Epperson, who's played the invincible glamour queen in a series of shows so highly regarded that his character recently found its way into the pages of *Esquire's* "Women We Love" issue. The current show is called "Lypsinka! Now It Can Be Lip-Synched!" It finds Lypsinka doing what she does best—lip-synching, of course—to Gloria Swanson, Natalie Wood, Patty Duke, and Judy Garland, among others. **caetano veloso** begins a week's worth of shows on Sept. 8. Shows Tuesdays through Thursdays at nine. Fridays and Saturdays at nine and eleven-fifteen. Closed Mondays.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—This northern restaurant-bar, an airy, two-tiered space with pastel walls and potted greenery, is a shade too slick for Columbia students but just right for post-collegiate jazz fans. The name is taken from the long-gone midtown pleasure dome that featured Bird himself. The Big Nick Nicholas quartet comes in on Sept. 4 and Kysia Bostic's quintet plays on Sept. 5. Music from nine. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—No one ever said going to the Blue Note was easy. But once you get past the rough bits—the hordes of tourists, the cattle-car seating, the stiff prices—you're likely to find yourself face to face with some monsters of jazz. The **billy cobham** band and the **larry coryell** duo are here Sept. 1-6; an outfit belonging to **herbie mann** starts up on Sept. 8. Music from nine. Dining.

Blue Willow, 644 Broadway, at Bleecker St. (673-6480)—This room is oddly Victorian for lower Broadway, a region almost exclusively devoted to the celebration of youth culture. You won't find funky murals or drinks with funny names here, just marble walls, antique furnishings, and a ceiling that would be hard to hit with a baseball. It's an agreeable place for conversation, which is probably why the small jazz combos that set up here nightly often get relegated to being background music. Music from seven-thirty Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A great, black loft that's jammed with row after row of tables—it looks a little like the site of a standardized test. Despite the cramped quarters, though, the Bottom Line is an easy, comfortable place to take in a folk or rock show. Sept 3-4 belongs to the **elvin jones jazz machine,** which features Sonny Fortune and Wynton Marsalis, among others. Shows at eight and eleven. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

Café Sin-é, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—A small, peach-walled storefront. Sin-é is usually given over to a young, earthy crowd that drinks Rolling Rock or café au lait and waits for some Irish musician or other to blow in and play a set. The café doesn't have a schedule per se, so it's often after the fact that one hears that some great Irish rocker has made a stop here. A frustrating state of affairs, perhaps, but one can have fun just hoping, waiting, and watching the door. Music generally begins at about eight-thirty.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—The city's most famed rock club—a dark, narrow cave with neon-beer-sign stalactites and ancestral graffiti—is part sacred burial ground and part historic landmark, but it hasn't succumbed to nostalgia: new and used bands of every stripe continue to pass through nightly. Music from eight on Sundays and Mondays, from eight-thirty Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from nine-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays.

Condon's, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—In the shadow of the Zeckendorf Towers sits this stucco-walled grotto, whose intimate scale makes it a fine spot for jazz. Pianist **tommy flanagan** is leading a trio here just now. Shows Tuesdays through Sundays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty, with late sets at one on Fridays and Saturdays.

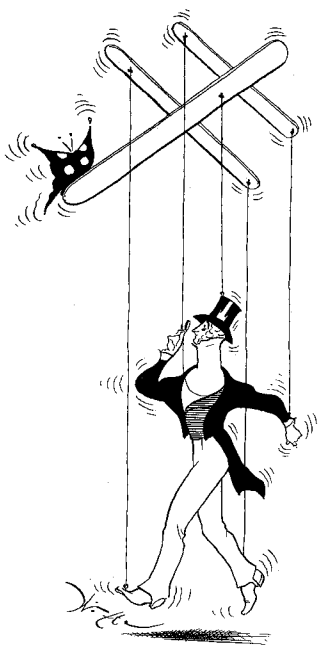
Cornelia Street Café, 29 Cornelia St. (989-9319)—In the basement of this tucked-away Village restaurant-bar is a narrow, white-brick-walled room, decorated with a few tables and steampipes, where you'll find music, poetry readings, and theatre-of-the-cramped. The restaurant itself is a wine-and-candlelight neighborhood café; downstairs, there's a do-it-yourself, sixties-coffeehouse aesthetic at work.

Dan Lynch, 221 Second Ave., at 14th St. (677-0911)—As uninviting a hole-in-the-wall as you're likely to find. This blues bar is dingy, depressingly lit, and located on a block out of a Gus Van Sant movie. In the world of blues, however, this spells authenticity, and the bands here are often worth the trouble. Music from ten nightly.

Duplex, 61 Christopher St., at Seventh Ave. (255-5438)—A two-floor entertainment center. The bright, clean, wedge-shaped downstairs bar has French windows giving on to the bustle of Seventh Avenue, but the clamor indoors is far greater. Everyone is a star here—the pianist, the bartender, and the waitresses sing/shout pop standards with risqué lyrics and fire off wisecracks across the room; patrons are encouraged to take the mike, too. Upstairs there's a quieter bar and a cabaret, where you'll find a variety of performers nightly.

Eighty-Eight's, 228 W. 10th St. (924-0088)—On Sept. 4 (and ensuing Fridays in September), **phillip officer** will be in this Village cabaret, performing a set devoted to Yip Harburg, a lyricist who collaborated with the likes of Harold Arlen and Vernon Duke. The show, called "Fancy Meeting You," will include such Harburg standards as "Over the Rainbow," "It's Only a Paper Moon," and "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime." Sets at eight-thirty. A parade of cabaret performers fills the other evenings.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—Through the iffy-looking side door, down the famous funhouse tunnel that's lined with mirrors and corrugated tin, and down a short flight of stairs, you'll find this softly lit, low-ceilinged, roughly Manhattan-shaped jazz preserve. Pianist **ahmad jamal** works out Sept. 1-6, and **dorothy donegan** gets started on Sept. 8. Ms. Donegan is a pianist with a virtuosic technique that reflects both her classical training and her days as an Art Tatum protégée. But she's equally renowned for the vaudevillian antics that have been the trademark of her fifty-year career: dancing, stomping, rolling her head, impersonating jazz divas, and generally raising Cain. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **les paul,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.



J's, 2581 Broadway, at 97th St. (666-3600)—An unpretentious second-floor jazz retreat where a bandleader was once heard saying, "I wanna introduce my drummer first on account of because he has to go put a quarter in the meter." Music from eight-thirty Sundays through Thursdays, and from nine on Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—A busy bar-and-grill in the piano-bass district. The musicians set up in the dining room, a clubby-looking space with leather banquettes and well-preserved collectibles: Sunday *Herald Tribune* covers, First World War posters, Hirschfeld cartoons. Up front, at the bar, you can keep your eye on the musicians, the conversationalists, and sidewalk life. **james williams** and **christian mc bride** are in action Sept. 2-5, and **hilton ruiz** starts a four-nighter on Sept. 9. Music from about nine-thirty.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—The club most likely to feature an electric-rake player. Run by a couple of forward-looking Wisconsinites, the Knitting Factory takes in all manner of neo-this and post-that ensembles. The atmosphere is low-key bohemian—it's like a frat house for the avant-garde. **richard barone,** the former leader of the Bongos, performs on Sept. 3. Since he split with his fellow-Hobokenites, Barone has released a couple of solo albums that showcase his crafty, thoughtful songwriting. Music after nine.

Lone Star Roadhouse, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—A two-tiered honky-tonk that looks as if it were the inspiration for the Hard Rock Café. (It wasn't, of course; money was.) Upstairs, there's a display of vintage Gibson guitars. Downstairs, in the dining room, there's a stage, a dance floor, and caricatures of musicians who have blown through over the years. The **zoo,** which is **mick fleetwood's** latest outfit, shares a bill with **soul kitchen** on Sept. 2, and **speir mor** comes in on Sept. 3. Music after nine. Dining.

Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—A bright spot on the little-heralded Upper East Side club scene. Don't go expecting to be sprayed with soapy water and massaged by large brushes: the fluorescent sign outside is the only car-wash reference. Inside, the place looks like an adman's idea of a blues bar. Sept. 3 belongs to **bobby radcliff,** Sept. 4-5 to the **hudson river rats.** Sets from nine-fifteen, except Sundays, when they begin at eight-forty-five.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—The bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. The **dead milkmen,** a jokey, irreverent, punk-inflected Philadelphia band, are here Sept. 4-5. The band's sense of humor is a little uneven, but they do have a few good song titles to their credit, such as the Rob Petrie paean "I Tripped Over the Ottoman." Shows are usually at ten on Thursdays, at eleven on Fridays and Saturdays, and at nine other nights.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A moondust-in-your-hair cabaret where a club soda costs, well, a *lot.* There are plenty of niceties if you're so inclined: an ear-popping express elevator in which you can mingle with the famous; tables scattered with plastic diamonds and sapphires; and rest-room attendants who hover near the sink asking "Is the water too warm?" The well-received Irving Berlin revue, "Say It with Music," marches on. **kaye ballard** heads the distinguished cast. Shows from nine. Dining. Closed Mondays.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—It may look like a plain old steak house, and the photos on the walls may look like Sardi's leftovers, but in the back room you'll find swing bands, Dixieland combos, and couples sprung from the legacy of Fred and Ginger. Mondays belong to the Smith Street Jazz Society, Tuesdays and Fridays to **vince giordano and the nighthawks,** Thursdays to

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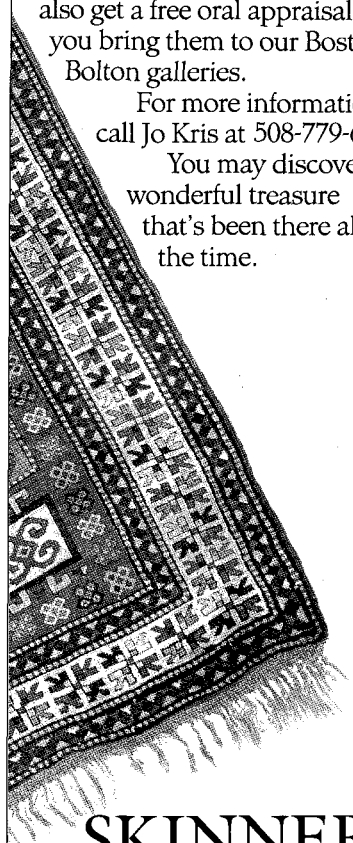

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NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

Stan Rubin's big band, and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and His Stompers. Show times vary.

SOUNDS OF BRAZIL, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—The closest thing in Manhattan to a rain forest, this venerable club has many selling points: tropical drinks, Brazilian food, faux palm trees, a thatch-roofed bar. The live music is primarily from Africa, Brazil, and the Caribbean, and the dance floor is usually hopping. This week's lineup includes Israel Vibration (Sept. 2-3), Tabou Combo Super Stars (Sept. 4), and Mighty Sparrow (Sept. 5). Music from nine-thirty Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from ten-thirty Fridays and Saturdays. Dining. Closed Sundays.

SPACE AT CHASE, 98 Third Ave., at 12th St. (475-1407)—One of those East Village joints where, for a few bucks, you can hear a handful of local rock bands. As is usually the case at these establishments, some of the bands will make you want to cower under the pinball machine while others will make you want to dance and shout and start your own independent label. As for décor, there's a bar, some chairs, some tables, some walls, a ceiling, and two dart boards. Music from nine-thirty, except on Tuesdays, when it starts at seven.

SUPPER CLUB, 240 W. 47th St. (921-1940)—Upstairs at this gilt-railinged, lamé-curtained club is a plush little nook called the Blue Room, which boasts celestial-motif wallpaper and a profusion of deep-sea blue. The racket of midtown can't find you here. **ANN HAMPTON CALLAWAY** performs Sept. 1-3 at nine; and singer-pianist-songwriter **CHARLES DE FOREST** holds forth Tuesdays through Saturdays from ten. Mr. DeForest culls much of his material from old movies and musicals, and he likes to put his discoveries in context, making him two parts performer, one part reviewer. There's nothing inaccessible about his show, however: anyone interested in how to put over a lyric would do well to pay him a visit.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A pretty serious jazz shrine, where, to reach the rest rooms, you have to pass within inches of the stage. This is significant because, if you head to the bathroom during a set, the crowd is likely to think you're a guest soloist. **MAL WALDRON** is leading a quintet for the next two weeks. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **MILES EVANS** is in action on Mondays. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

TRAMPS, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Thanks to low lighting, muralled pillars, ironwork, and a beautifully restored old tin ceiling, this loft space manages to feel homey. The sound system can be overwhelming, but the place is big enough to accommodate both those who want to lose their hearing and those who don't. Zydeco, soul, blues, and rock are the main order of business here. The **SELECTOR,** the **TOASTERS,** and Let's Go Bowling are here on Sept. 5. Sets at eight and eleven weeknights, eight-thirty and eleven-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—This windowless, slice-of-pie-shaped basement has an illustrious history that embraces everyone from Judy Holliday to Lenny Bruce, from Pete Seeger and Leadbelly to Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins. **JOSHUA REDMAN** heads up an ensemble here Sept. 1-6; **JAVON JACKSON & FRIENDS** begin work on Sept. 8. Mondays are reserved for the **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA.** Music after nine-thirty.

WETLANDS, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Home of an endless Summer of Love. Wetlands is a groovy, psychedelic, thoroughly Green night club. It is filled more or less nightly with young bands who like to play long, swirling jams and throngs of young Deadheads who like to listen them. This week: Dead Center and Roadtrips on Sept. 1; Journey Around Music on Sept. 2; Soft Parade on Sept. 5; the Authority on Sept. 6. Music at ten.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—A rarity among jazz clubs: somewhere you'd go to eat even if there were no music. The food is Italian, the atmosphere is pastels and soft lights, and the musicians, who set up in a room between the bar and the dining room, are first-rate. **TAL FARLOW** and **GARY MAZZAROPPI** are here through Sept. 5; **MICHAEL LE DONNE** and **PETER WASHINGTON** start up on Sept. 8. Music from eight every night but Sundays, when sets begin at seven-thirty. Closed Sept. 6-7.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

THE modelling-agency party is the Final Clearance Sale of club life. As soon as the traffic bottleneck in front of the latest destined-to-be-the-next Mudd Club dwindles enough that fresco-panelled garbage trucks can barrel through without anyone giving them the finger, it's time to get out the Ford or Wilhelmina Rolodexes and start mailing invitations. Linda and Christy may drip glamour and rake in enough cash to dance on tabletops in Sardinia, but most models can barely afford a trip to Jones Beach. Thus, the appearance of an invitation promising free admission, free eats, and, most important, two hours of open bar is usually sufficient to get the pouts in place. How can a club buttress its sagging assets with a freebie crowd? It can't. But as Live Bait, Coffee Shop, Rex, and Whiskey Bar have shown, where lanky, buff models go, many less hollow cheekbones follow. Promoters make sure that model rats get invitations, too, only their requested arrival time is immediately after the closing of an open bar. Model rats catch up fast.

The latest stack of mailbox stuffers promised a flotilla of Zoli lovelies at midtown's Supper Club, which opened this spring in the hope of bringing soigné dining and dancing to a space done up more patriotically than the Republican National Convention. Yet on this particular Thursday the club looked and operated like any other disco, albeit with several additional problems. The major hazard of a makeshift transformation is a staff ill trained in the art of the quick shift. This results in doormen who don't recognize club regulars, bartenders who fumble money like tourists at a token booth, and a traffic pattern worse than Miami's after Andrew. Despite such obstacles, fortune-seeking faces find it remarkably easy to steer clear of their devotees, because only the latter dance. The former (of both sexes) have tattoos and look like Brad Pitt—this year. When asked if he was having a good time, one totem of style bent his head down, swung his hair back and ran his fingers through it twice, then pulled a forelock forward. Beat, beat, beat. "I think so," he said without a smile. "It's not like I hate it or anything. And there's beer." *Harper's Bazaar* says we're entering the age of elegance. We must have gone through the wrong door.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

THE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF PUPPET THEATRE—Two weeks of puppet-oriented performances, lectures, and movies, geared mostly to adult audiences and presented jointly by the Jim Henson Foundation and the people at the Public Theatre. Sept 7 at 1 and Sept. 8-9 at 8: Vermont's Bread and Puppet Theatre presents puppets with a political conscience. . . . ¶ Sept. 9 at 8: Roman Paska, a solo performer who uses rod puppets. Through Sept. 12. . . . ¶ Sept. 9 at 8: The Stuffed Puppet Theatre, of the Netherlands. (Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. The festival continues through Sept. 20.)

PENNY ARCADE—In "Bitch! Dyke! Faghag! Whore!" (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Sept. 3-6 at 9.)

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ART

ISLAM's influence on Spanish culture is one of the great long chapters in the book of civilization, as Kenneth Clark no doubt explained. Beginning with the appearance, during the eighth century, of magical animal figures and charmed vegetation on Romanesque columns, and peaking during the so-called Dark Ages with an awe-inspiring fusion of North African, Mesopotamian, and Latin traditions, the Muhammadan effect on the Iberian Peninsula is one big aesthetic seduction. "Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain," at the Met (through September 27), is nevertheless a neurotic exhibition. First assembled in Granada—at the Alhambra, no less, a breathtaking indoor-outdoor palace complex that does not provide anything resembling modern museum conditions—"Al-Andalus" began life as an extravagant display of vitrines in which ancient shards and fragile manuscripts were treated as if they were premature infants.

Now in New York, these powerful objects—a mysterious bronze griffin, on loan from Pisa; an intricately carved wood cupola ceiling, from the Alhambra's Palacio del Partal; a group of exquisitely written Korans; a vermillion curtain of quasi-minimalist abstract splendor; an intense, oversized Alhambra vase—are quarantined in the Lehman Wing. The installation looks good, particularly in relation to the red brick façades, with their Moorish flavor, that wall the exhibition space. Yet "Al-Andalus" does not convey the full range and formal excellence of Islamic Spain, nor does it transport one, Disney-style, to some debased but entertaining version of it. Rather, it's the ghost of the museum extravaganzas of the "Bonfire" period. Viewers at the Met could enhance their experience with a visit to the museum's sensational, under-trafficked Islamic wing: the eighteenth-century room from Damascus is enough to send you on a sultry brief vacation.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain" includes more than a hundred works of art, from a wood ceiling to a mosaic dado to an ivory coffin. Through Sept. 27. . . . ¶ The recent donation of the Perls collection—a hundred and sixty-three objects from the kingdom of Benin—has substantially redefined the museum's African holdings. This exhibition of the collection is a welcome relief from the rigid theatre of many of the museum's blockbusters: it enables viewers to make their own discoveries. The art from Benin, dating from the sixteenth century through the nineteenth, is quite naturalistic and of high quality. There are exquisite brass heads of kings and queen mothers that feature the precious coral-bead collars worn by royalty; a number of plaques, depicting processions and the court hierarchy, which adorned the pillars of the royal palace; bells, altar rings, and numerous other ceremonial objects; and a brass rooster, which, as a symbol of power, would have honored a queen mother. Through Sept. 13. . . . ¶ "Modern Design: 1890-1990" shows off the museum's holdings in twentieth-century furniture, architectural and design drawings, glass, ceramics, and other objects. Through Oct. 25. . . . NOTE: The museum's roof garden, planted with eight sculptures by

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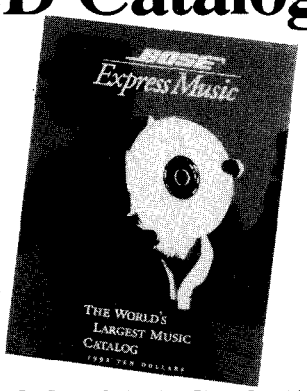

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ART–Cont'd

Rodin, is open when the weather permits. Through Nov. 1. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"The Photographs of Lucas Samaras" includes thirty works from his many series of Polaroids. Through Dec. 1. (See Photography.)... ¶ "The Young Rebel in American Photography, 1950-1970" presents work by, among others, Diane Arbus, Larry Clark, Bruce Davidson, Robert Frank, and Lee Friedlander. Through Oct. 13. (See Photography listing.)... ¶ Cults of personality, while working wonders for the business of many modern designers, have at times spoiled the idealism in which modern design is rooted. The Finnish designer Kaj Franck, who shunned stardom, happily never had any trouble finding buyers for his remarkably lean and timeless utilitarian pieces. In this small, pleasant exhibition, Franck's gloriously spare designs are left to speak for themselves. Particularly impressive is his Kilta tableware, which was in production from 1953 to 1975 and still looks contemporary. Its finely tuned colors, in such contrasting shades as deep aqua green and chartreuse, seem like refined versions of our own Fiestaware. Even when he worked at the higher end of the market, Franck kept his purity intact. His Soap Bubble vases, from the nineteen-fifties, are so lifelike that they look ready to float blissfully away. Through Oct. 12. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The permanent collection is on view in the small rotunda and the new annex. (Open daily, except Thursdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway—The new branch, in a loft building whose floors have been transformed by Arata Isozaki, is sleek, with large paintings by Andy Warhol, Antoni Tàpies, Joan Mitchell, and Roy Lichtenstein decorating the reception area. But the inaugural show, grandiosely titled "From Brancusi to Bourgeois," is shameless. It includes, on the ground floor, a group of works by Joseph Beuys and Louise Bourgeois. While her enclosures and display cases are sensationally potent, his installations look as if they had been plunked down in an automobile showroom. On the vast bisected floor upstairs, the situation is even worse. On one side, white-on-white paintings by Robert Ryman seem to have been hung as backdrops to a group of Brancusi sculptures, while, on the other side, several floor pieces by Carl Andre undermine an assortment of extraordinary paintings and drawings by Kandinsky, who, as ever, is at once this museum's bulwark and its sacrificial lamb. Through Sept. 7. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings until 10.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"Homecoming: William H. Johnson and Afro-America, 1938-46." The show goes into the painter's later styles in greater depth, but it could prove misleading if seen without the benefit of the complementary show (through Sept. 20) at the Studio Museum in Harlem. A "positive image" of black American culture seems to be the Whitney's overweening message. Johnson's worldliness and formal ties, however, may have been slighted. Through Oct. 25.... ¶ An auxiliary exhibition, "Parallel Visions," draws on the museum's permanent collection to provide a context for viewing the works of Johnson. Among the artists represented here are Philip Evergood, Edward Hopper, Jacob Lawrence, Ben Shahn, and Alice Trumbull Mason. Through Oct. 25... ¶ The third part of a show of recent additions to the museum's collection; more than seventy paintings and sculptures are included. Through Sept. 20. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"Painters of a New Century: The Eight & American Art," an exhibition devoted to the work of the turn-of-the-century painters known as the Eight: Arthur B. Davies, William Glackens, Robert Henri, Ernest Lawson, George Luks, Maurice Prendergast, Everett Shinn, and John Sloan. Through Sept. 21.... ¶ Complementing the "Eight" show is a smaller display of prints, drawings, watercolors, and pastels by these same artists, as well as by George Bellows, Jerome Myers, and Walt Kuhn.

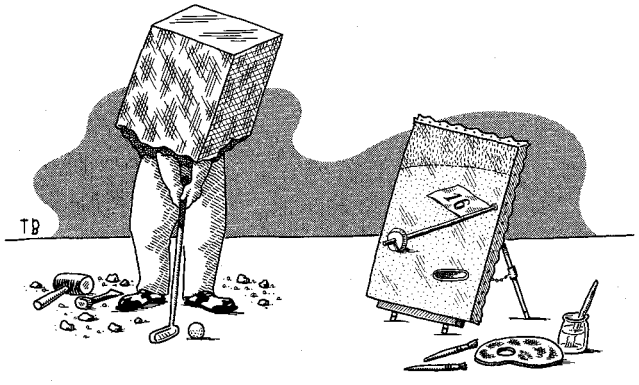
Alexander Gardner at the International Center of Photography

Through Sept. 21.... ¶ "Tacit Transit," a new installation, by Korean-born artist Jin Soo Kim, that consists of wire-mesh modules and found objects. Through Sept. 6. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"The Prehistoric Mammals of Charles R. Knight" features thirty paintings and sculptural re-creations by the artist, who, in preparation for his work, painstakingly studied both fossils and living animals. Through Nov. 1.... ¶ A large exhibition titled "Global Warming—Understanding the Forecast," which was developed by the museum and the Environmental Defense Fund. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—The second part of "A Decade of Craft" features ceramics, metalwork, and fibre art from the permanent collection. Through Nov. 8.... ¶ Multiple examples of teapots, bowls, chairs, and many other forms are the focus of "More Than One: Contemporary Studio Production." Through Nov. 8.... ¶ "Marigold," an installation by Robert Kushner, is on view in the lobby. Through Sept. 21. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—"The Art of Embellishment" features fifty painted and stencilled objects—doors, pieces of furniture, tinware, and textiles—from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American homes. Through Sept. 6.... ¶ The American hand-carved walking stick (more varieties than you can shake one at) is the subject of "Step Lively: The Art of the Folk Cane." Through Sept. 13. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11:30 to 7:30.)



"Putt-Modernism"

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—"Broadway! 125 Years of Musical Theatre." A large assortment of objects—including paintings, posters, scripts, models, sheet music, and memorabilia—from nearly seventy-five productions that have bowed on the Great White Way. First seen in New York last summer at the IBM Gallery. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—A hundred and twenty-four prints, drawings, and watercolors by the German artist Lovis Corinth (1858-1925). Through Sept. 13.... ¶ "The Artist's Eye," the first in a series of exhibitions to be curated by artists who are academy members. Philip Pearlstein has done the selecting here; among the forty works on view are Ryder's "Marine" and Sargent's "Portrait of Monet." Through Jan. 15. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5; Friday evenings until 8, with no admission charge after 5.)

New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—"Ansel Adams: The Early Years" covers the period from 1919 to 1941 and includes, along with several of the famous Western landscapes, lesser-known still-lifes, portraits, and views of New York City. Through Oct. 11.... ¶ An exhibition, mostly of paintings, from the collection of the Century Association. Some of the works, such as Albert Bierstadt's "Guerrilla Warfare, Civil War" (1862) and Winslow Homer's "Nurse and Child" (1868), were accepted by the association in lieu of an initiation fee. Through Oct. 11.... ¶ "Party Time: Presidential Campaigns Since 1832," a large gathering of glorious political artifacts. Through Sept. 20. (In conjunction with the exhibition, the society and the League of Women Voters will offer voter registration on Sept. 17 from 5 to 8 P.M.) (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 11 to 5, and Thursday evenings until 8; Sundays, 11 to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"In Life or Death Forever," a comprehensive show commemorating the centenary of Walt Whitman's death, includes a hundred and fifty manuscripts, books, photographs, and letters, culled from both the Berg and Oscar Lion collections. Through Sept. 12. (Berg Exhibition Room.) (Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum, 32-37 Vernon Blvd., at 33rd Rd., Long Island City—Noguchi (1904-88) designed this oasis for more than two hundred and fifty of his own sculptures. The entire range of his work is on view, from the early surrealistic biomorphic sculptures through several types of stone carvings, and including documentation of his prodigious public-art projects. The centerpiece of the museum is a peaceful, ivy-walled garden dotted with sculptures. (Open Wednesdays and Saturdays, 11 to 6.)

Queens Museum of Art, Flushing Meadow Park—"Colombia: Contemporary Images," an exhibition of paintings and sculptures by thirty-five native Colombians. Through Sept. 13.... ¶ Drawings and distorted silhouettes by Brazilian installation artist Regina Silveira. Through Sept. 13. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—A retrospective of the career of William H. Johnson, in conjuction with the "Homecoming" show at the Whitney Museum. William H. Johnson, who was born in 1901, in Florence, South Carolina, moved to New York in 1918, and soon enrolled in the school of the National Academy of Design. In 1926, he moved to France and, after a brief return to the States, to Scandinavia. He lived there for nearly a decade while travelling widely with his wife, a Danish textile artist. Landscapes from this period, and expressionistic portraits such as his remarkable "Young Pastry Cook" (ca. 1928-1930), recall Vlaminck and Soutine. And Alice Neel seems particularly kindred. John-

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son in effect cleaned his palette when he got back to America, and his work assumed the cadences of the black Southern folkloric tradition, both rural and urban. Johnson's work from 1938 to about 1945 includes many bright, deceptively simple watercolors in which black soldiers are depicted boarding trains, marching, fighting, convalescing, or being killed. There is also a buoyant array of highly stylized history paintings commemorating such important figures as Nat Turner and the signers of the Yalta agreements. Around the time of his wife's death, in 1943, the artist turned increasingly to religious hymns and traditional spirituals for inspiration. He also returned to Denmark for a last visit. By 1947, Johnson's career as an artist was over: thoroughly incapacitated by what had been diagnosed as syphilis-induced paresis, he was committed to Long Island's Central Islip State Hospital, where he died in 1970. The over-all shape of Johnson's œuvre may best be sensed in the small but representative show here. Through Sept. 20. . . . ¶ An exhibition of a dozen large-scale paintings and a dozen works on paper by William T. Williams. Through Nov. 15. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Mondays through Fridays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

"Putt-Modernism"—An entertaining and provocative eighteen-hole miniature-golf course, in which each hole has been designed by a different contemporary artist. In Gregory Amenoff's piece, the ball travels down a time line of Elvis's life to a cup labelled "Las Vegas: Hole of Fate." Pat Oleszko and Ward Shelley have you trying to outmaneuver their larger-than-life inflatable clown, who wears a hat called Censorama and looks suspiciously like Jesse Helms. The hole designed by Chris Clarke—a Bronx native who used to play miniature golf under the Broadway El—is a comment about the government's neglect of the AIDS epidemic; you putt the ball along a path and then through a replica of the White House made of neon tubes and AZT and Zovirax bottles. The golf balls are imprinted with "truisms" by Jenny Holzer ("Raise boys and girls the same way," "Absolute submission can be a form of freedom"). You can rent a putter for five bucks, and just looking is free. Through Sept. 27. (Artists Space, 223 West Broadway. The course is open Thursdays through Saturdays from noon until midnight and Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Sundays from noon until ten.)

"Up River!"—Cruise up the Hudson in Midtown. Selected from the Hudson River Museum of Westchester, this show features more than fifty nineteenth-century paintings and drawings, along with rare books, works on paper, and photographs. Among the artists represented are George Inness, William Hart, Jasper Cropsey, James Bard, and Julian O. Davidson. Through Oct. 2. (PaineWebber Building, Sixth Ave. at 52nd St. Open Mondays, except Sept. 7, through Fridays, 8 to 6.)

OTHER VENUES

"Art in the Anchorage"—Creative Time has mounted its ninth annual summer salon in the vaults of the Brooklyn Bridge. On view are six installations, by Helene Aylon, Gretchen Bender, Mildred Howard, Seiko Mikami, the Women's Action Coalition, and Liz Young; a continuous slide presentation of works by photographers Nina Kuo, Dona McAdams, Marilyn Nance, and Lynda Rodolitz; and a memorial exhibition of works by furniture designer and graphic artist Don Ruddy. Several readings, panel discussions, and performances are also scheduled at various times during the run of the show. Through Sept. 20. (Cadman Plaza West at Front St., Brooklyn. Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

"Cross Section"—Battery Park City has been transformed into one huge indoor-and-outdoor sculpture park for this show of seventy-five contemporary works, which are on loan from nineteen New York City museums. Among the sixty-five artists represented are Viola Frey, Nam June Paik, Alfredo Jaar, Louise Bourgeois, Christian Marclay, Isamu Noguchi, and Faith Ringgold. Through Sept. 20. (Battery Park City and World Financial

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ART–Cont'd

Center. Exhibition guides are available at kiosks throughout the area.)

"HOUSES OF SPIRIT/MEMORIES OF ANCESTORS"—Another outdoor sculpture show, only this time the setting is Woodlawn Cemetery, in the Bronx. Each of the eight works deals in some way with the here, the hereafter, concepts of family, gender, and home. Artists include Tom Finkelpearl, Kathleen McCarthy, Renee Stout, and Dina Bursztyn. Through Nov. 1. (Jerome Ave. entrance, at Bainbridge Ave. Open daily, 9 to 4:30.)

HIT PARADE

If, to tinker with Balzac, behind every great city lies a great crime, then certainly New York's crowning sin took place on that day, in 1626, when the Dutch bought Manhattan for twenty-four dollars. But many other offenses since have been almost as colossal, at least according to Paul Schwartzman and Rob Polner, the authors of "New York Notorious," which is billed as "a borough-by-borough tour of the city's most infamous crime scenes." Many of the book's entries tread familiar turf—the spot in Central Park where Jennifer Levin was murdered; the Happy Land social club—but there are also plenty that identify unfamiliar and forgotten scenes. There's the Coney Island eatery where mobster Joe (The Boss) Masseria was blown away, in 1922, at the behest of Lucky Luciano, whose initial alibi was that he was in the men's room. ("I always take a long leak," he said.) There's the Women's House of Detention, in Greenwich Village, whose denizens were well known for conducting business—and love affairs—from their jail windows with cronies on the sidewalk below. And there's the Sixty-third Street site where Mae West's revue "Sex"—a title that another bad-girl blonde, Madonna, has lifted for her own upcoming peekaboo project—was closed down on morals charges. (The raid took place eleven months after the show opened: the authorities evidently wanted to make sure that a crime was taking place.)

Schwartzman and Polner are Manhattan-based tabloid reporters, and their book's subheads and photo captions reflect the grungy flair associated with that branch of journalism. The entry on the East Side town house to which Richard Nixon escaped after resigning the Presidency is titled "Dick." And the account of the fate of one Alvin Rodecker, who was killed when a dumbbell fell on him from a window of Arlene Francis's Park Avenue apartment, is slugged "Goodbye." The punchiest headline, though, was conceived not by Schwartzman and Polner but by the editors of the News. *For the January 12, 1928, front-page photo of husband-killer Ruth Snyder frying in the electric chair, they came up with the dark banner "DEAD!" "Headless Body in Topless Bar" sounds positively long-winded in comparison.*

PHOTOGRAPHY

A CONVERSATION with Lucas Samaras always turns up something instructive about art or artists, so we took the occasion of his Museum of Modern Art photography show (through December 1) to give him a call. Samaras is a kind of Renaissance artist—he has worked for decades in such varied mediums as painting, sculpture, drawing, and photography—and we wondered if he minded that this show only includes one fragment of his vision: a selection of the Polaroid pieces he made between 1969 and 1986. His answer displayed his typical emphasis on the importance of preserving mystery—an attitude that runs counter to the desire for hyper-exposure more common today: "Whenever someone from the outside selects just one part of you to present to the world it puts that aspect of you under intense scrutiny. But they don't get to steal all of you, because meanwhile all your other things are still hidden. With a giant retrospective your whole life has been put on the wall, and that can kill the creator. Also, this situation is good because if people say my photos stink, I can answer that I also have mirror structures, I have boxes, I have. . . ."

Samaras's Polaroids hardly stink. As in the rest of his work, Samaras has shown here his capacity to find infinite possibilities and complexities in the seemingly simplest things. Many of these images are about breaking through the surface to reveal the depths; in a number of the photographs he has actually worked with a knife, slicing and cutting and then putting the tableaux back together. This wide-ranging exhibition, organized by Peter Galassi, includes self-portraits, as well as nudes of dealers, collectors, writers; these disarming photographs are a good example of Samaras's high interest in the individuals of the art world. "You must understand," he said, "that practically all of these people never took their clothes off for an art experience. And when they agreed to do this for me it was like the most extraordinary gift. I was so thrilled to have this kind of access to all parts of the art community, because the art community is the world for me."

"THE YOUNG REBEL IN AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHY, 1950-1970"—A perennial American type is being explored in this smart show. In photography no less than in movies and literature, new images of the rebel seem to arise with every generation, and they exert enormous influence on popular culture. Some of the images here seem innocent by today's standards—such as Bruce Davidson's photographs of a gang of teen-agers whose symbols of rebellion are cigarettes and beer. But there are also tougher pictures, such as Larry Clark's 1971 photographs of kids shooting up, and Diane Arbus's picture of a transvestite sitting on a bed. Through Oct. 13. (Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

"AN ENDURING INTEREST: THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF ALEXANDER GARDNER"—Gardner's many portraits of Abraham Lincoln are endlessly fascinating character studies, and his Civil War photographs—which he published himself, along with the work of several colleagues, in "Gardner's Photographic Sketch Book of the War"—combine fact and emotion so persuasively that he has been called one of the inventors of photojournalism. He took casual as well as formal portraits of Union officers and enlisted men, he photographed Confederate prisoners and wounded soldiers, and he memorialized the dead on the battlefield, who are seen as weighted forms among the rocks and sticks, already part of the earth beneath them. Through Sept. 6. (International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesdays until 8.)

MUSIC

SO the Köchel Festival is over at last. All kidding aside, we think Lincoln Center's grand scramble through almost every surviving note of Mozart was a worthwhile project—a kind of open house in his collected works, an invitation to the public to come in and poke around where scholars and specialists live.

We didn't hear all the concerts, but we heard a lot of them, and looked at many scores we otherwise wouldn't have (especially the apprentice operas, the church music for Salzburg, the works for sub-orchestral ensembles), and reread Mozart's letters, and kept up with some of the scholarly articles. If the long celebration didn't provide any epiphanies comparable to those so many felt upon, say, prolonged exposure to Handel's operas in the 1985 tercentenary performances, it may simply mean that Mozart was pretty well known already. But our sense of Mozart's development is certainly heightened; overexposure has only deepened the wonder with which we regard "Die Zauberflöte," the Clarinet Concerto, and Mozart's parts of the Requiem.

Conventional wisdom pegs Mozart as a genius from an early age; we are now more inclined to see, in the foreshortened span of his adult career, a progression as steep and impressive as the long climbs of Verdi and Wagner, in the next century. In the music Mozart composed up to the age of twenty-one there are any number of well-balanced things, some lovely andantes, some harmonic inventiveness. But a good deal of the music is dry and dutiful, as compared to the control of atmosphere and rich invention of Mendelssohn's "Midsummer Night's Dream" Overture or his Octet, or the mature feeling and dramatic conviction of Schubert's "Gretchen am Spinnrade" (the first in a long list of teen-age masterpieces) or the imaginative leaps and emotional adventurousness of the Études that Chopin was already playing on his tours at age nineteen. These three and perhaps a few others may have surpassed Mozart in precocity; that no composer surpassed him in maturity, even though he died at thirty-five, makes his life seem all the more miraculous.

OPERA

NEW YORK CITY OPERA—TURANDOT, with Ealynn Voss, Christiane Riel, Antonio Barasorda, and Philip Cokorinos; conducted by Steven Sloane. (Sept. 1 and Sept. 4 at 8.). . . IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA, with Kathryn Gamberoni, Paul Austin Kelly, Robert Orth, and Jan Opalach;

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Scott Bergeson. (Sept. 2 and Sept. 5 at 8.)... **RIGOLETTO,** with Elizabeth Futral, Susanne Marsee, Richard Drews, Donnie Ray Albert, and Kevin Bell; Joseph Colaneri. (Sept. 3 and Sept. 9 at 8.)... **LA BOHÈME,** with Gwynne Geyer, Nina Warren, Robert Brubaker, and Eugene Perry; Mark Gibson. (Sept. 5 at 1:30.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

CONCERTS

BARGEMUSIC—Pianist Christopher O'Riley plays Stravinsky's "Apollon Musagète," in a version based on the composer's own piano reduction prepared for use in rehearsals. For this performance, however, Mr. O'Riley has reinserted numerous details from the original 1926 string-orchestra score, yielding what is essentially a new piano transcription of Stravinsky's neo-classic classic—or, as Mr. O'Riley ever so Apollinically puts it, "a paean to the history of Western music, from Bach and Rameau and Gluck to Tchaikovsky and Mussorgsky." Also on the program are a Mozart violin sonata (with Carmit Zori) and Brahms' C-Minor Piano Trio (in which cellist Jian Wang completes the ensemble). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718

Reba McEntire at Jones Beach

624-4061. Sept. 3 at 7:30 and Sept. 6 at 4.)

TEATIME TUNES—As Sunday afternoon turns into evening, the folks who run the Hotel Wales are wont to offer hour-long chamber-music concerts in their second-floor salon. In this installment, the Quintet of the Americas (a woodwind ensemble) performs music by Gershwin and Villa-Lobos, among others. (Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Sept. 6 at 6. No tickets necessary.)

NAUMBERG ORCHESTRA—Jens Nygaard conducts a fanfare of his own composition, Weber's "Der Freischütz" Overture, Brahms' Symphony No. 2, and Vieuxtemps's Violin Concerto No. 1 (with Paul Rosenthal as soloist). (Damrosch Park, Lincoln Center. Sept. 6 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

JAZZ/POP/ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

TITO PUENTE AND THE LATIN JAZZ ALL-STARS—World Financial Center Plaza, Battery Park City. Sept. 2 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.

OZZY OSBOURNE—In a concert rescheduled from July 16. (Meadowlands Arena. 1-201 935-3900. Sept. 3 at 7:30.)

PANTERA—With White Zombie and Trouble. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. Sept. 4 at 8. For tickets, call 307-7171.)

KRIS KROSS—With M.C. Lyte. (Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Sept. 5 at 8.)

SALSA FESTIVAL—El Gran Combo, Celia Cruz, Orquesta de la Luz, y otros grupos musicales. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Sept. 5 at 8.)

CAETANO VELOSO—Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Sept. 5 at 8 and Sept. 6 at 7.

DELACORTE THEATRE—Aug. 31: Elizabeth Swados and Simon Shaheen.... ¶ Sept. 4: Eddie Palmieri. (Central Park near W. 81st St. Concerts at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 861-7277.)

JONES BEACH THEATRE—Sept. 1 at 8: Reba McEntire and Vince Gill.... ¶ Sept. 2 at 6:30: Ray Charles, B. B. King, Buddy Guy, Dr. John, and the Fabulous Thunderbirds.... ¶ Sept. 3-4 at 8: James Taylor.... ¶ Sept. 5 at 8: Joe Cocker and the Neville Brothers.... ¶ Sept. 6 at 8: Lynyrd Skynyrd and Delbert McClinton. (For information about tickets, call 1-516 221-1000.)

SOUTH STREET SEAPORT—A three-day festival. Sept. 5 at 6: Leo Kottke, the Horseflies, and Jeff Buckley.... ¶ Sept. 6 at 8: Beausoleil and Chubby Carrier. (Fireworks follow this concert.)... ¶ Sept. 7 at 5: Tom Rush, Bitchin' Babes (Christine Lavin, Julie Gold, Sally Fingerett, and Megon McDonough), and Steve Packenham. (Pier 16, East River at Fulton St. No tickets necessary.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

YANKEES—Vs. the Texas Rangers, Sept. 4 at 7:30, and Sept. 5-6 at 1:30.

METS—Vs. the Atlanta Braves, Aug. 31 at 5:10 (a doubleheader), Sept. 1 at 7:40, and Sept. 2 at 1:40.

GIANTS—Vs. the San Francisco 49ers, Sept. 6 at 4.

(The Yankees play at Yankee Stadium, 1-718 293-6000; the Mets play at Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499; and the Giants play at Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands, 1-201 935-8111.)

RACING

HORSES—At Belmont: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1. Starts Sept. 2.... At Monmouth Park, Oceanport, N.J.: Daily, except Mondays and Thursdays, at 1:05. Through Sept. 6.... At Atlantic City Race Course: Tuesdays through Saturdays at 7:25. Through Sept. 5.... **TROTTING** at Yonkers Raceway: Mondays through Saturdays at 8 and Tuesdays at 1; Sundays at 6:45.... At Saratoga Raceway, Saratoga Springs: Weeknights at 7:45.

CHAMPIONSHIP—TENNIS

U. S. OPEN—The best players in the world will be on the courts at the U.S.T.A. National Tennis Center in Flushing Meadow, through Sept. 13. For information about tickets, call 1-718 271-5100.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

WIGSTOCK—A modern-day Woodstock, in which the performers are in drag and everyone wears wigs. Billed as "more fun than Christmas." Lady Bunny will, as usual, be the mistress of ceremonies. (Tompkins Square Park. Sept. 7, from noon to 8. No tickets or invitations required.)

FESTIVALS—Sept. 6, starting at 10: The eighth annual Brazilian street festival, on 46th St., between Madison and Sixth Aves., will be an all-day celebration of Brazilian music, food, crafts, dancing, and other pleasures.... ¶ Sept. 6, starting at noon: El Fieston de Nueva York is being billed as the largest Latino festival ever held in New York City, a celebration of New Yorkers' Latin roots. Performers, who will be situated all over midtown, from Herald to Times Square, include José Feliciano, Willie Colon, and Paul Rodriguez.

WASHINGTON SQUARE OUTDOOR ART EXHIBIT—The sixty-first anniversary show will be held on two weekends: Sept. 5-7 and Sept. 12-13, from noon to sundown. Prizes will be awarded in such categories as Art for Children, Graphics, Photography, and Oils.

WORDPLAY—An exhibition of "concrete poetry," in which poetry is combined with visual art, by Robert Lax, Mary Ellen Solt, Ian Hamilton Finlay, John Furnival, and Bob Cobbing, among others. (Butler Library, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. Open weekdays, from 9 to 4:45. Through Oct. 23.)

WALKS—Sponsored by Adventure on a Shoestring. Sept. 4 at 5:30: A stroll through the theatre district.... ¶ Sept. 6 at 2: A walk across the Williamsburg Bridge into Brooklyn. (For reservations, call 265-2663.)

MEMORANDUM—Labor Day will be observed on Sept. 7. The annual parade starts at 11 A.M. from Fifth Ave. and 44th St. and continues uptown to 72nd St.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

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6	7	8	9			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 16.

EAST SIDE

ANGELIKA FILM CENTER, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Enchanted April" (†).
Theatre 2: "Light Sleeper" (directed by Paul Schrader), with Willem Dafoe, Susan Sarandon, Dana Delany, David Clennon, Victor Garber, and Mary Beth Hurt.
Theatre 3: "The Living End" (Gregg Araki).
Theatre 4: "Johnny Suede" (Tom DiCillo), with Brad Pitt and Catherine Keener.
Theatre 5: "Night on Earth" (†).
Theatre 6: "Delicatessen" (Jean-Pierre Jeunet and Marc Caro, in French).

LITTLE THEATRE, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Through Sept. 3: "Wax or the Discovery of Television Among the Bees" (1991, David Blair).
From Sept. 4: "Woman Demon Human" (1987, Huang Schugin; in Mandarin); and "Limite" (1931, Mario Peixoto; a Brazilian silent film).

MOVIELAND 8TH STREET TRIPLEX, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Rapid Fire" (Dwight H. Little), with Brandon Lee.
Theatre 2: "Unforgiven" (†).
Theatre 3: "Pet Sematary Two" (Mary Lambert), with Edward Furlong, Anthony Edwards, Clancy Brown, and Jared Rushton.

VILLAGE THEATRE VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "Stay Tuned" (Peter Hyams), with John Ritter and Pam Dawber.
Theatre 2: "Single White Female" (†).
Theatre 3: "A League of Their Own" (†).
Theatre 4: "Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me" (David Lynch), with Kyle MacLachlan, Sheryl Lee, Ray Wise, David Bowie, Harry Dean Stanton, and Moira Kelly.
Theatre 5: "Single White Female" (†).
Theatre 6: "One False Move" (†).
Theatre 7: Through Sept. 3: (Matinées only) "Little Nemo: Adventures in Slumberland" (William T. Hurtz), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Diggstown" (Michael Ritchie), with James Woods, Louis Gossett, Jr., and Bruce Dern. From Sept. 4: "Bob Roberts" (†).

VILLAGE EAST CINEMAS, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "Sister Act" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Player" (†).
Theatre 3: "London Kills Me" (Hanif Kureishi), with Justin Chadwick.
Theatre 4: (Separate admissions) "3 Ninjas" (Jon Turteltaub), with Victor Wong; and "Honey, I Blew Up the Kid" (Randal Kleiser), with Rick Moranis and Marcia Strassman.
Theatre 5: "The Hairdresser's Husband" (Patrice Leconte, in French), with Jean Rochefort and Anna Galiena.
Theatre 6: "A Stranger Among Us" (†).
Theatre 7: (Matinées only) "Freddie as F.R.O.7." (Jon Acevski), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Mo' Money" (Peter Macdonald), with Damon Wayans.

19TH STREET EAST 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Whispers in the Dark" (†).
Theatre 2: "Boomerang" (†).
Theatre 3: "Pet Sematary Two" (Mary Lambert), with Edward Furlong, Anthony Edwards, Clancy Brown, and Jared Rushton.
Theatre 4: "Honeymoon in Vegas" (†).
Theatre 5: "Christopher Columbus: The Discovery" (John Glen), with George Corraface, Marlon Brando, Tom Selleck, and Rachel Ward.
Theatre 6: "Unforgiven" (†).

GRAMERCY, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"Sister Act" (†).

BAY CINEMA, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Single White Female" (†).

MURRAY HILL CINEMAS, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me" (David Lynch), with Kyle MacLachlan, Sheryl Lee, Ray Wise, David Bowie, Harry Dean Stanton, and Moira Kelly.
Theatre 2: "Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me."
Theatre 3: (Separate admissions) "Freddie as F.R.O.7." (Jon Acevski), an animated film; "Diggstown" (Michael Ritchie), with James Woods, Louis Gossett, Jr., and Bruce Dern; and "Raising Cain" (†).
Theatre 4: "Rapid Fire" (Dwight H. Little), with Brandon Lee.

34TH STREET SHOWPLACE, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Honeymoon in Vegas" (†).
Theatre 2: "Unforgiven" (†).
Theatre 3: "Pet Sematary Two" (Mary Lambert), with Edward Furlong, Anthony Edwards, Clancy Brown, and Jared Rushton.

34TH ST. EAST, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Death Becomes Her" (†).

EASTSIDE CINEMA, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"The Ox" (Sven Nykvist, in Swedish).

SUTTON 1 AND 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "The Hairdresser's Husband" (Patrice Leconte, in French), with Jean Rochefort and Anna Galiena.
Theatre 2: "One False Move" (†).

GOTHAM CINEMA, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Storyville" (Mark Frost), with James Spader, Joanne Whalley-Kilmer, and Jason Robards.

PLAZA, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Unlawful Entry" (†).

MANHATTAN TWIN, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Rapid Fire" (Dwight H. Little), with Brandon Lee.
Theatre 2: "Rapid Fire."

59TH STREET EAST CINEMA, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Mo' Money" (Peter Macdonald), with Damon Wayans, Marlon Wayans, Stacey Dash, Joe Santos, John Diehl, and Harry J. Lennix.

BARONET AND CORONET, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Death Becomes Her" (†).
Theatre 2: "Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me" (David Lynch), with Kyle MacLachlan, Sheryl Lee, Ray Wise, David Bowie, Harry Dean Stanton, and Moira Kelly.

CINEMA I, CINEMA II, AND CINEMA 3RD AVENUE, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 3: "A Stranger Among Us" (†). From Sept. 4: "Bob Roberts" (†).
Theatre 2: "Enchanted April" (†).
Theatre 3: "Sister Act" (†).

ART EAST CINEMA, 1st Ave. at 61st. (644-1111)
Through Sept. 3: "Mediterraneo" (Gabriele Salvatores, in Italian).
From Sept. 4: To be announced.

FIRST & 62ND CINEMAS, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "Raising Cain" (†).
Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "Freddie as F.R.O.7." (Jon Acevski), an animated film; and (evenings only) "The Player" (†).
Theatre 3: "Pet Sematary Two" (Mary Lambert), with Edward Furlong, Anthony Edwards, Clancy Brown, and Jared Rushton.
Theatre 4: "Raising Cain" (†).
Theatre 5: Through Sept. 3: "Diggstown" (Michael Ritchie), with James Woods, Louis Gossett, Jr., and Bruce Dern. From Sept. 4: "Out on a Limb" (Francis Veber), with Matthew Broderick, Jeffrey Jones, and Heidi Kling.
Theatre 6: "Pet Sematary Two."

GEMINI 1 AND 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Stay Tuned" (Peter Hyams), with John Ritter and Pam Dawber.
Theatre 2: "Christopher Columbus: The Discovery" (John Glen), with George Corraface, Marlon Brando, Tom Selleck, and Rachel Ward.

BEEKMAN, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Single White Female" (†).

NEW YORK TWIN, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Unforgiven" (†).
Theatre 2: "Honeymoon in Vegas" (†).

68TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Light Sleeper" (Paul Schrader), with Willem Dafoe and Susan Sarandon.

TOWER EAST, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"A League of Their Own" (†).

EAST 85TH STREET, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
(Matinées only) "Honey, I Blew Up the Kid" (Randal Kleiser), with Rick Moranis and Marcia Strassman; and (evenings only) "A Stranger Among Us" (†).

PARK & 86TH STREET CINEMAS, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Rapid Fire" (Dwight H. Little), with Brandon Lee.
Theatre 2: "Honeymoon in Vegas" (†).

ORPHEUM VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: "Single White Female" (†).
Theatre 2: "Single White Female" (†).
Theatre 3: (Matinées only) "Freddie as F.R.O.7." (Jon Acevski), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Whispers in the Dark" (†).
Theatre 4: "Christopher Columbus: The Discovery" (John Glen), with George Corraface, Marlon Brando, Tom Selleck, and Rachel Ward.
Theatre 5: "Pet Sematary Two" (Mary Lambert), with Edward Furlong, Anthony Edwards, Clancy Brown, and Jared Rushton.
Theatre 6: "Diggstown" (Michael Ritchie), with James Woods, Louis Gossett, Jr., and Bruce Dern.
Theatre 7: "Unforgiven" (†).

86TH STREET EAST TWIN, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: (Matinées only) "Little Nemo: Adventures in Slumberland" (William T. Hurtz), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Sister Act" (†).
Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "3 Ninjas" (Jon Turteltaub), with Victor Wong; and (evenings only) "Death Becomes Her" (†).

WEST SIDE

FILM FORUM, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 8: "Wild Wheels" (directed by Harrod Blank), a documentary. From Sept. 9: "Brother's Keeper" (Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky), a documentary.
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "Gas Food Lodging" (Allison Anders).

WAVERLY 1 AND 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Laws of Gravity" (Nick Gomez).
Theatre 2: "Raising Cain" (†).

ART GREENWICH TWIN, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Honeymoon in Vegas" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 3: "Death Becomes Her" (†). From Sept. 4: "Out on a Limb" (Francis Veber), with Matthew Broderick, Jeffrey Jones, and Heidi Kling.

QUAD CINEMA, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "A Tale of Springtime" (Eric Rohmer, in French).
Theatre 2: "The Best Intentions" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Sept. 3: "Mediterraneo" (Gabriele Salvatores, in Italian). From Sept. 4: "The Tune" (Bill Plympton), an animated film.
Theatre 4: "The Ox" (Sven Nykvist, in Swedish).

CHELSEA CINEMAS, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me" (David Lynch), with Kyle MacLachlan, Sheryl Lee, Ray Wise, David Bowie, Harry Dean Stanton, and Moira Kelly.
Theatre 2: "Raising Cain" (†).
Theatre 3: "Death Becomes Her" (†).
Theatre 4: Through Sept. 3: "Diggstown" (Michael Ritchie), with James Woods, Louis Gossett, Jr., and Bruce Dern. From Sept. 4: "Out on a Limb" (Francis Veber), with Matthew Broderick, Jeffrey Jones, and Heidi Kling.
Theatre 5: "A League of Their Own" (†).
Theatre 6: "Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me."
Theatre 7: "Single White Female" (†).
Theatre 8: (Matinées only) "Freddie as F.R.O.7." (Jon Acevski), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Raising Cain" (†).
Theatre 9: "Single White Female" (†).

23RD ST. WEST TRIPLEX, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Rapid Fire" (Dwight H. Little), with Brandon Lee.
Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "3 Ninjas" (Jon Turteltaub), with Victor Wong; and (evenings only) "Mo' Money" (Peter Macdonald), with Damon Wayans, Marlon Wayans, Stacey Dash, Joe Santos, John Diehl, and Harry J. Lennix.
Theatre 3: "Rapid Fire."

GUILD, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"3 Ninjas" (Jon Turteltaub), with Victor Wong.

WORLDWIDE CINEMAS, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Single White Female" (†).
Theatre 2: "Sister Act" (†).
Theatre 3: "A League of Their Own" (†).
Theatre 4: (Matinées only) "Little Nemo: Adventures in Slumberland" (William T. Hurtz), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Whispers in the Dark" (†).
Theatre 5: "Raising Cain" (†).

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Theatre 6: Through Sept. 3: (Matinées only) "Freddie as F.R.O.7." (Jon Acevski), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Unlawful Entry" (†). From Sept. 4: "Out on a Limb" (Francis Veber), with Matthew Broderick, Jeffrey Jones, and Heidi Kling.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Death Becomes Her" (†).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
(Matinées only) "Freddie as F.R.O.7." (Jon Acevski), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Patriot Games" (Phillip Noyce), with Harrison Ford.

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Mistress" (Barry Primus), with Robert Wuhl.

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Manhattan" (1979, Woody Allen), with Allen, Diane Keaton, Michael Murphy, and Meryl Streep.
Theatre 2: "The Best Intentions" (†).

Fine Arts, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"Howards End" (†).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"The Player" (†).

Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
Through Sept. 3: "A Stranger Among Us" (†). From Sept. 4: "Bob Roberts" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"Honeymoon in Vegas" (†).

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "La Discrète" (Christian Vincent; in French), with Fabrice Luchini and Maurice Garrel.
Theatre 2: "A Brief History of Time" (†).
Theatre 3: "A Brief History of Time" (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Death Becomes Her" (†).

84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Pet Sematary Two" (Mary Lambert), with Edward Furlong, Anthony Edwards, Clancy Brown, and Jared Rushton.
Theatre 2: "Single White Female" (†).
Theatre 3: "Light Sleeper" (Paul Schrader), with Willem Dafoe, Susan Sarandon, Dana Delany, David Clennon, Victor Garber, and Mary Beth Hurt.
Theatre 4: "Christopher Columbus: The Discovery" (John Glen), with George Corraface, Marlon Brando, Tom Selleck, and Rachel Ward.
Theatre 5: "Unforgiven" (†).
Theatre 6: "Whispers in the Dark" (†).

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 3: "Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me" (David Lynch), with Kyle MacLachlan, Sheryl Lee, Ray Wise, David Bowie, Harry Dean Stanton, and Moira Kelly. From Sept. 4: "Out on a Limb" (Francis Veber), with Matthew Broderick, Jeffrey Jones, and Heidi Kling.
Theatre 2: "A League of Their Own" (†).

Olympia 1 and 11, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: (Matinées only) "Freddie as F.R.O.7." (Jon Acevski), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Raising Cain" (†).
Theatre 2: "Rapid Fire" (Dwight H. Little), with Brandon Lee.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

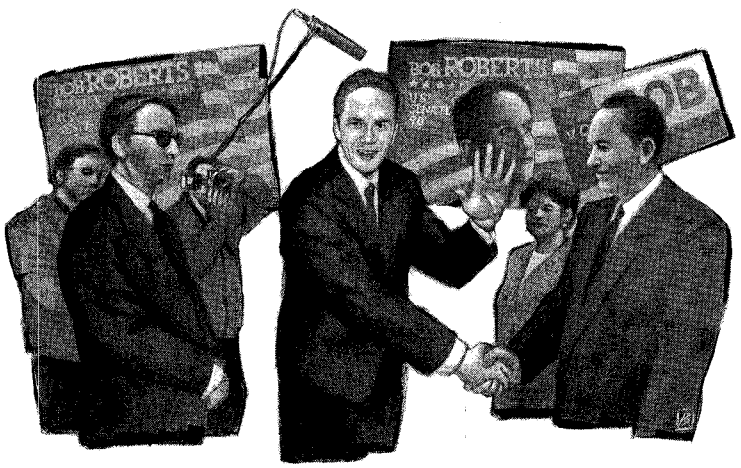
Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Christopher Columbus: The Discovery" (directed by John Glen), with George Corraface, Marlon Brando, Tom Selleck, and Rachel Ward.
Theatre 2: "Universal Soldier" (†).
Theatre 3: "Basic Instinct" (Paul Verhoeven), with Michael Douglas and Sharon Stone.
Theatre 4: "Batman Returns" (†).
Theatre 5: "Unforgiven" (†).
Theatre 6: "Diggstown" (Michael Ritchie), with James Woods, Louis Gossett, Jr., and Bruce Dern.
Theatre 7: "Rapid Fire" (Dwight H. Little), with Brandon Lee.

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"Honeymoon in Vegas" (†).

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "Mo' Money" (Peter Macdonald), with Damon Wayans, Marlon Wayans, Stacey Dash, Joe Santos, John Diehl, and Harry J. Lennix.
Theatre 2: "Boomerang" (†).
Theatre 3: "Honey, I Blew Up the Kid" (Randal Kleiser), with Rick Moranis, Marcia Strassman, Lloyd Bridges, Robert Oliveri, and John Shea.

Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Pet Sematary Two" (Mary Lambert), with Edward Furlong, Anthony Edwards, Clancy Brown, and Jared Rushton.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me" (David Lynch), with Kyle MacLachlan, Sheryl Lee, Ray Wise, David Bowie, Harry Dean Stanton, and Moira Kelly.
Theatre 2: "Single White Female" (†).



Alan Rickman (left) and Tim Robbins (center) in "Bob Roberts"

REVIVAL HOUSES

Le Cinematographe, 15 Vandam St. (675-4680)
Through Sept. 1: "The Killing of a Chinese Bookie" (1976, directed by John Cassavetes), with Ben Gazzara.
Sept. 2: "Shadows" (1961, John Cassavetes).
Sept. 3: "Opening Night" (1978, John Cassavetes), with Gena Rowlands, Ben Gazzara, Cassavetes, Joan Blondell, and Paul Stewart.
From Sept. 4: To be announced.

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
Through Sept. 1: "Via Appia" (Jochen Hick).
Sept. 2-3: "La Dolce Vita" (1960, Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Marcello Mastroianni and Anita Ekberg.
Sept. 4-5: "Pink Floyd, The Wall" (1982, Alan Parker); and "The Song Remains the Same" (1976, Peter Clifton and Joe Massot), with Led Zeppelin.
Sept. 6-8: "2001: A Space Odyssey" (1968, Stanley Kubrick), with Keir Dullea and Gary Lockwood; and "Full Metal Jacket" (†).
From Sept. 9: "Slacker" (Richard Linklater); and "The Graduate" (1967, Mike Nichols), with Anne Bancroft, Dustin Hoffman, Katharine Ross, William Daniels, Elizabeth Wilson, and Murray Hamilton.

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Aug. 31: "Invaders from Mars" (1953, William Cameron Menzies), with Helena Carter, Arthur Franz, and Jimmy Hunt; and "The 5,000 Fingers of Dr. T." (1953, Roy Rowland), with Peter Lind Hayes, Mary Healy, Hans Conried, and Tommy Rettig.
Sept. 1-2: "Deluge" (1933, Felix E. Feist); and "Chandu the Magician" (1932, William Cameron Menzies and Marcel Varnel), with Bela Lugosi and Edmund Lowe.
Sept. 3: "Bride of the Gorilla" (1952, Curt Siodmak), with Lon Chaney, Jr.; and "The Navy vs. the Night Monsters" (1966), with Mamie Van Doren and Bobby Van.
Sept. 4-7: "Phantom of the Rue Morgue" (1954, Roy Del Ruth), with Karl Malden, Claude Dauphin, Patricia Medina, and Steve Forrest.
Sept. 8-9: "Plan 9 from Outer Space" (1956, Edward D. Wood, Jr.), with Bela Lugosi; "Night of the Ghouls" (1960, Wood); and "Jail Bait" (1954, Wood), with Lyle Talbot.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
Aug. 31: "Sandra" (1966, Visconti; in Italian), with Claudia Cardinale and Michael Craig; and "Senso" (1955, Luchino Visconti; in Italian), with Farley Granger and Alida Valli.
Sept. 1: "Animal Crackers" (1930, Victor Herrman) and "Duck Soup" (1933, Leo McCarey), both with the Marx Brothers.
Sept. 2: "Nightmare Alley" (1947, Edmund Goulding), with Tyrone Power, Joan Blondell, and Coleen Gray; and "The Razor's Edge" (1946, Goulding), with Gene Tierney, Power, Anne Baxter, Herbert Marshall, and Clifton Webb.
Sept. 3: "Chinatown" (1974, Roman Polanski), with Jack Nicholson, Faye Dunaway, and John Huston; and "Cul-de-Sac" (1966, Polanski), with Donald Pleasence and Françoise Dorléac.
Sept. 4-5: "Breakfast at Tiffany's" (1961, Blake Edwards), with Audrey Hepburn, George Peppard, Patricia Neal, Buddy Ebsen, Martin Balsam, and Mickey Rooney; and "Roman Holiday" (1953, William Wyler), with Hepburn, Gregory Peck, and Eddie Albert.
Sept. 6: "1900" (1977, Bernardo Bertolucci), with Robert De Niro, Burt Lancaster, Donald Sutherland, Dominique Sanda, Alida Valli, Sterling Hayden, Stefania Sandrelli, and Gérard Depardieu.
Sept. 7: "Playtime" (1967, Jacques Tati), with Tati; and "Mr. Hulot's Holiday" (see page 19).
Sept. 8: "The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner" (1962, Tony Richardson), with Michael Redgrave and Tom Courtenay; and "Look Back in Anger" (†).
Sept. 9: "Deadline—U.S.A." (1952, Richard Brooks), with Humphrey Bogart, Kim Hunter, and Ethel Barrymore; and "Blackboard Jungle" (†).

Tribeca Cinema, 41 White St. (925-2570)
Through Sept. 1: "Traffic" (1971, Jacques Tati); and "Mr. Hulot's Holiday" (see page 19).
Sept. 2-3: "Some Like It Hot" (1959, Billy Wilder), with Marilyn Monroe, Tony Curtis, and Jack Lemmon; and "Memories of Me" (1988, Henry Winkler), with Billy Crystal, Alan King, and JoBeth Williams.
Sept. 4-5: "Lolita" (1962, Stanley Kubrick), with Sue Lyon, James Mason, Peter Sellers, and Shelley Winters; and "Paths of Glory" (†).
Sept. 6: "La Dolce Vita" (1960, Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Marcello Mastroianni and Anita Ekberg.
Sept. 7-8: "That Obscure Object of Desire" (†); and "The Exterminating Angel" (1962, Luis Buñuel; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with Silvia Pinal.
From Sept. 9: "The Condemned of Altona" (1963, Vittorio De Sica), with Sophia Loren, Maximilian Schell, Fredric March, and Robert Wagner; and "Closely Watched Trains" (†).

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Aug. 31 at noon: "Andrei Roublev" (1965, directed by Andrei Tarkovsky; in Russian), with Anatoliy Solonitsyn. . . . ¶ Aug. 31 at 4: "My Night at Maud's" (1970, Eric Rohmer; in French), with Jean-Louis Trintignant. . . . ¶ Aug. 31 at 6: "The Fiancées" (1963, Ermanno Olmi; in Italian). . . . ¶ Sept. 1 at noon and Sept. 5 at 2:30: "Brightness" (1987, Souleymane Cissé; a Malian film, in Bambara). . . . ¶ Sept. 1 at 3 and Sept. 5 at 5: "One Day Like Another" (1980, Mrinal Sen; in Bengali). . . . ¶ Sept. 1 at 6 and Sept. 3 at 3: "Loulou" (1980, Maurice Pialat; in French), with Isabelle Huppert, Gérard Depardieu, and Guy Marchand. . . . ¶ Sept. 3 at noon: "Miss Julie" (†). . . . ¶ Sept. 3 at 6 and Sept. 4 at 1: "The Travelling Players" (1975, Theo Angelopoulos; in Greek). . . . ¶ Sept. 4 at 6 and Sept. 5 at noon: "Moonlighting" (1982, Jerzy Skolimowski), with Jeremy Irons. . . . ¶ Sept. 6 at noon: "Heat and Dust" (1983, James Ivory), with Julie Christie, Greta Scacchi, and Shashi Kapoor. . . . ¶ Sept. 6 at 2:30 and Sept. 8 at 3: "Before the Revolution" (†). . . . ¶ Sept. 6 at 5: "Hallelujah the Hills" (1963, Adolfas Mekas), with Peter H. Beard. . . . ¶ Sept. 7 at noon: "Young Törless" (1968, Volker Schlöndorff; in German). . . . ¶ Sept. 7 at 2:30: "Cleo from 5 to 7" (†). . . . ¶ Sept. 7 at 6 and Sept. 8 at noon: "The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith" (†). . . . ¶ Sept. 8 at 6: "Exodus" (1960, Otto Preminger), with Paul Newman, Eva Marie Saint, Sal Mineo, Ralph Richardson, and Lee J. Cobb.

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MOVIE HOUSES–Cont'd

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—Aug. 31 at 2 and 6:30 and Sept. 1 at 4:30 and 9:15: "The Fate of Lee Khan" (1973, King Hu). . . . ¶ Aug. 31 at 4:15 and 9 and Sept. 1 at 2 and 6:30: "The Pioneers" (1979, Richard Y. Chen). . . . ¶ Sept. 2 at 2, Sept. 5 at 6, and Sept. 6 at 2, 5:15, and 8:30: "A Touch of Zen" (1969-75, King Hu). . . . ¶ Sept. 3 at 2, 4, and 6: "Starry Is the Night" (1987, Ann Hui). . . . ¶ Sept. 4 at 2, 6:15, and 10:15 and Sept. 5 at 4:15 and 9: "Red Dust" (1990, Yim Ho). . . . ¶ Sept. 4 at 4 and 8 and Sept. 5 at 2: "Raining in the Mountain" (1978, King Hu). . . . ¶ Sept. 7 at 2 and 6:45 and Sept. 8 at 4:30 and 9: "The Valiant Ones" (1975, King Hu). . . . ¶ Sept. 7 at 4:30 and 9 and Sept. 8 at 2 and 6:45: "Five Girls and a Rope" (1991, Yeh Hung-Wei). . . . ¶ Sept. 9 at 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10: "John Lurie and the Lounge Lizards in Berlin" (1991, Garret Linn), a documentary.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077) "American Impressionist: A Robert Altman Retrospective." Sept. 5 at 2: "Two by South: 'Precious Blood' and 'Rattlesnake in a Cooler'" (1982), two one-act plays shown on the Arts and Entertainment network, with Alfre Woodard. . . . ¶ Sept. 5 at 4:30 and Sept. 6 at 2: "Fool for Love" (†). . . . ¶ Sept. 6 at 4: "O.C. and Stiggs" (1987), with Daniel H. Jenkins, Neill Barry, Jane Curtin, and Dennis Hopper.

Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—"Jim Henson's World of Television." "The Kermit and Piggy Story" (1976-1981) and "Kermit and Miss Piggy Guest Appearances" (1976-90). Showings Tuesdays through Saturdays at 1. . . . ¶ "The Jim Henson Hour: Monster Maker" (1989) and "Greek Myths: Theseus and the Minotaur" (1989). Showings Saturdays and Sundays at 3:30.

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

Batman Returns—Tim Burton's sequel to his phenomenally successful 1989 "Batman" doesn't try to top the first picture, either with splashier special effects or with loftier pretensions to significance; nor does it simply go through the motions, repeating the surefire stuff with a self-satisfied air of professionalism. It's a blend of playful novelty and reassuring familiarity—a difficult mixture to get right. This time, the hero (again Michael Keaton) does battle with a greedy businessman named Max Shreck (Christopher Walken) and the roly-poly arch-criminal known as the Penguin (Danny DeVito). And whenever Batman ventures out on one of his nocturnal crime-fighting missions, he runs into a mysterious woman who dresses like a cat and carries a whip. The hilariously twisted relationship between the hero and the Catwoman (Michelle Pfeiffer) plays like an apache dance in animal costumes, and it's the glory of the movie. The cat clothes seem to release something strange and wild in Pfeiffer: her performance is ferociously sexy and uninhibitedly, over-the-top funny. As in the first movie, Burton gives the material a luxurious masked-ball quality and a sly contemporary wit without violating the myth's low, cheesy comic-book origins. He's an artist who's comfortable with both the higher aspirations and the lower instincts of his nature as an entertainer: he and Batman are an ideal match. Screenplay by Daniel Waters; cinematography by Stefan Czapsky; score by Danny Elfman; production design by Bo Welch.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 6/29/92.) (Criterion Center.)

Before the Revolution (1964)—A sweepingly romantic movie about a young man's rebellion against bourgeois life and his disillusion with Communism, set in Parma and written and directed by Bernardo Bertolucci at the astonishing age of twenty-two. He captures what has rarely been seen on the screen—the extravagance and poetry of youthful ardor. The hero, Fabrizio, discovers that he is not single-minded enough to be a revolutionary, that he is too deeply involved in the beauty of life as it is *before* the revolution. He has "a nostalgia for the present." (The characters of Fabrizio and his young aunt Gina are loosely derived from Stendhal's "The Charterhouse of Parma.") With Francesco Barilli, Adriana Asti, Allen Midgette, and Morando Morandini; cinematography by Aldo Scavardo; music by Gino Paoli and Ennio Morricone. This was Bertolucci's second feature; his first was "La Commare Secca" ("The Grim Reaper"). In Italian.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Sept. 6 and 8.)

The Best Intentions—It boasts the built-in interest of a script by Ingmar Bergman, dramatizing the courtship and early married life of his parents. Bille August directed, and Jorgen Persson did the cinematography; their square filmmaking has an antique sheen. But they've made an orderly movie about disorderly conduct. At three hours, the drama, about the mismatch between a tormented, self-denying pastor (Samuel Froler) and a coddled bourgeois woman (Pernilla August), is one prolonged, unrevealing study in frustration. Of course we know that these two won't live happily ever after; they did give birth to Ingmar Bergman. With its inexorable depiction of increasing marital woe, this film is the cinematic equivalent of predestination. Except for the expressive Max von Sydow (in the role of Bergman's maternal grandfather), the actors don't operate in a climate of free will; they register carefully prescribed dollops of anguish. In Swedish.—M.S. (7/27/92) (Quad Cinema, and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

Blackboard Jungle (1955)—It was a shocking movie at the time and was said to provoke violence, and when Clare Boothe Luce, then American ambassador to Italy, protested its showing at the Venice Film Festival, its international fame was assured. The subject—contempt for authority (in a metropolitan trade school)—is treated as a problem with a definite solution. Surrounded by hostile and delinquent boys, the hero, an idealistic teacher, played by Glenn Ford, tries to reach the salvageable one among them—Sidney Poitier, who gives an angry, exciting performance. (He makes you feel his tensions and heat.) The director, Richard Brooks, wrote the script, adapted from Evan Hunter's novel, and it's sane and well worked out, though it's hard for audiences to believe in the hero's courage, and not hard at all for them to believe in the apathetic cowardice of the other teachers. If you excavate Evan Hunter's short story on which the rather shoddy novel was based, it's no big surprise to find that in the original account, "To Break the Wall," the teacher did not break through. Once again, a "daring" Hollywood movie exposes social tensions—touches a nerve—and then pours on the sweet nothings. But along the melodramatic way, there are some startling episodes (and one first-rate bit of racial interchange), and recordings by Bix Beiderbecke, Stan Kenton, Bill Holman, and others set quite a pace. (The music behind the opening titles—Bill Haley and the Comets on "Rock Around the Clock"—really made people sit up.) Glenn Ford seethes all the time, but he's fairly competent. With Louis Calhern, who's always fun to watch; Margaret Hayes, as the teacher who's a candidate for rape; Anne Francis in the tiresome role of Ford's pregnant wife; Richard Kiley, as the embarrassingly weak-kneed teacher whose jazz records get smashed. Also with John Hoyt, Paul Mazursky, Emile Meyer, Horace McMahon, Warner Anderson, and Vic Morrow as the Brando-style hoodlum. Cinematography by Russell Harlan.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 9.)

At Film Forum 2, Edward D. Wood, Jr.,'s "Jail Bait"

Bob Roberts—With Tim Robbins, Giancarlo Esposito, Ray Wise, Gore Vidal, John Cusack, Peter Gallagher, Alan Richman, Susan Sarandon, James Spader, and Fred Ward; directed by Robbins. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Village Theatre VII, Cinema I, and Columbus Circle; starting Sept. 4.)

Boomerang—Set in a world where entire upscale companies are run by African-Americans, this Eddie Murphy vehicle tries hard to be positive. It's a pity that the movie isn't any good. Murphy is a Manhattan marketing hot shot and ladies' man who ends up working under the woman of his dreams (Robin Givens) when their cosmetics firms merge. She treats him as cavalierly as he treated the previous women in his life; the script hands out one earnest lesson after another, so that he can learn what it feels like to be used. Givens knows how to employ her flashing eyes and chiselled, haughty features for comic effect, but she doesn't get a single clever line. As the gal who strives to save the hero, Halle Berry is so much more accessible than Givens, while being equally pretty, that dramatically there's no contest. Murphy has a couple of peppy scenes with David Alan Grier and Martin Lawrence, who play his best buddies, but a lot of the time he acts unconvincingly modest. The screenplay (by Barry W. Blaustein and David Sheffield), with its constant references to Murphy's sexual magnetism, does all the bragging for him. Padded with manic interludes involving Eartha Kitt, Geoffrey Holder, and Grace Jones; directed by Reginald Hudlin.—M.S. (7/13/92) (19th Street East 6, and Embassy.)

A Brief History of Time—A documentary, directed by Errol Morris. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Lincoln Plaza.)

The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith (1978)—This great Australian film was taken from Thomas Keneally's novel, which is like Nat Turner's story as a lusty ironist—an Irish Nabokov, perhaps—might have written it. The director, Fred Schepisi, dramatizes the inability of the displaced Europeans at the turn of the century (scrabbling tightwads who got where they are by self-denial) to understand the aborigines who live in the remnants of a tribal society with an elaborate structure of claims: men are obliged to give a share of their earnings to their kin, even if their kin are drunken and diseased and want the money only to go on a binge. And men offer their wives to visiting kin as a form of hospitality. To the whites, giving money away is unfathomable laxity, and since the black women are so easily available the white men treat the aboriginal settlements as brothels. Jimmie Blacksmith is a product of one of these visits to a tin shanty: a half-caste who is taught by a Methodist minister, he grows up determined to escape the debased existence of aborigines in their hovels by working hard, buying land, and, as the minister's wife has advised him, marrying a nice white

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girl off a farm, so his children will be only a quarter black and the next generation scarcely black at all. The film is the grotesque, explosive comedy-tragedy of what happens to this young man; trying to improve himself, he's like a hair-raisingly foolish cross between Jude the Obscure and Gunga Din. When he rebels, it isn't out of conscious militancy or a demand for political justice, it's out of helplessness and frustration. It's as if he had let his unconscious take over. He says he has declared war, but he doesn't wage war directly against the men; he attacks the men's most prized possessions—their robust, well-fed women, their pink-and-white children. With Tommy Lewis as Jimmie, and Freddy Reynolds as laughing Mort, his aborigine half-brother, a loyal, easygoing bum in ragged tweeds who makes us understand what the Europeans have destroyed. This is a large-scale film—a visually impassioned epic.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Sept. 7-8.)

Cleo from 5 to 7 (1962)—One of the few films directed by a woman in which the viewer can sense a difference. The story is about the moods of a beautiful, chic popular singer (Corinne Marchand) during the two hours she waits to find out if she has cancer. Childish and fearful, she consults her horoscope and goes to a fortune-teller; she buys a hat; she rehearses a song; she cries. And throughout, the writer-director, Agnès Varda, sustains an unsentimental yet subjective tone that is almost unique in the history of movies. Cinematography by Jean Rabier; editing by Janine Verneau; music by Michel Legrand (who also plays a part). With Antoine Bourseiller, Dorothée Blanck, and Dominique Davray. In French.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Sept. 7.)

Closely Watched Trains (1966)—A wryly tender Czech film about how a shy, scared young man, who comes from a long line of patsies and fools, succeeds in bed but loses his life. This first film directed by Jirí Menzel is based on the well-known ironic novel by Bohumil Hrabal, who collaborated with Menzel on the scenario. It's set during the Second World War, and most of it takes place at a village railway station; it's fairly simple—the modest sort of film that shows human concern and decency but isn't very stimulating, and that sometimes takes the Academy Award for Best Foreign Film (as this one did). But it's also a sophisticated, elliptical folk tale, with quirky moments of small-town passion, and a funny sequence in which an assistant station-master rubber-stamps a girl telegrapher's buttocks. In Czech.—P.K. (Tribeca Cinema; starting Sept. 9.)

Death Becomes Her—If he'd cut it to twenty-six minutes, Robert Zemeckis' duelling-bitch comedy would have been a super episode of the HBO anthology series, "Tales from the Crypt." It stars Meryl Streep as a Broadway-Hollywood diva, Goldie Hawn as her high-school chum, and Bruce Willis as the plastic surgeon they both desire. At its peak, Zemeckis, the cast, and the special-effects team achieve de-luxe variations on the TV show's macabre slapstick. But at a hundred and three minutes, the laughs dribble away. The script, by Martin Donovan and David Koepp, which pivots on an immortality potion, is basically an excuse for Streep and Hawn to wallop each other with the aid of flesh-bending special effects. Too often the lines are witless and the narrative invention pitiful. The best reason to see the movie is Streep. In this film about women losing control of their bodies, she is more at home in hers than ever before.—M.S. (8/24/92) (34th St. East, Baronet, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, and Regency. . . . ¶ 86th Street East Twin. Evenings only. . . . ¶ Art Greenwich Twin; through Sept. 3.)

Enchanted April—Adapted by Peter Barnes from Elizabeth von Arnim's 1922 novel, this period romance has a healthy sprinkling of bewitchments. The lead characters are two proper middle-class English ladies, played by Josie Lawrence and Miranda Richardson, who, partly to get away from their husbands, pool their resources to rent an Italian villa named San Salvatore for a month. They ultimately share expenses with an austere, cultured widow (Joan Plowright) and a gorgeous, bored aristocrat (Polly Walker). Italy awakens the women's sensuality and imagination, and gives them perspective; Lawrence and Richardson end up jolting their deadhead husbands (played by Alfred Molina and Jim Broadbent) back to life. The director, Mike Newell, handles the performers deftly and sympathetically, from the wonderfully ebullient Lawrence and the ravishing Walker to the robustly comical Plowright; Michael Kitchen contributes a tour de force of eccentric charm as the villa's owner. If the film, with its brittle, satiric London scenes and its expansive Italian ones, breaks too distinctly into pieces, the magic of the sunnier locations seals the cracks. The cinematographer, Rex Maidment, captures the enveloping pastoral euphoria of San Salvatore; the movie was shot at the same Mediterranean estate where von Arnim composed her novel.—M.S. (8/10/92) (Angelika Film Center, and Cinema II.)

Fool for Love (1986)—You'd think that if anybody could film Sam Shepard's 1983 play and keep it metaphorical and rowdy and sexually charged it would be the intuitive Robert Altman, but the material seems to congeal on the screen, and congealed rambunctiousness is not a pretty sight. The play—a carnal (and existential) screwball comedy—is about the no-exit tormented sex relationship between Eddie, a broken-down rodeo cowboy (Shepard), and his half sister, May (Kim Basinger), who lives in a cheap motel "on the edge of the Mojave Desert." It's counterculture macho (circa "Easy Rider") gone mythic. Though this stuff isn't much, it might get by if it were just faster and more kinetic, if there were less mood and atmosphere, and Eddie and May were ferociously passionate and excitable. But Sam Shepard's adaptation opens out the play and the steam escapes. And Altman directs this adaptation almost reverently, as a series of near-static pictures. As Eddie, Shepard is a feeble presence; when he delivers Eddie's lines they have no visceral force. Kim Basinger works hard and she has a flushed, smeary-faced, wounded quality, but she lacks spirit. Randy Quaid gives the role of Martin, May's gentleman caller, a solid, hick doggedness (and Shepard does his best acting in his hipster-outlaw gamesmanship with Quaid). As the Old Man, the lovers' father, Harry Dean Stanton has the right tequila-swigging grunginess but he doesn't seem to have any idea what he should be doing. The cinematography is by Pierre Mignot; the country songs were written and performed by Sandy Rogers.—P.K. (American Museum of the Moving Image; Sept. 5-6.)

Full Metal Jacket (1987)—Stanley Kubrick's Vietnam film stays reasonably close to its source, Gustav Hasford's compressed, white-hot novel "The Short-Timers," yet the novel has an accumulating force of horror and the movie doesn't. The first three-quarters of an hour is basic training in the Marines stripped down to a cartoonish horror show; it's military S & M, and the pounding compulsiveness can easily be taken for the work of a master director. After that, the movie becomes dispersed, and you can't get an emotional reading on it. Kubrick probably believes he's numbing us by the power of his vision, but he's actually numbing us by its emptiness. Here's a director who has been insulated from American life for more than two decades, and he proceeds to define the American crisis of the century. He does it by lingering for a near-pornographic eternity over a young Vietnamese woman who is in pain and pleads "Shoot me! Shoot me!" This is James M. Cain in Vietnam. The script is by Kubrick, Michael Herr, and Hasford. Shot in England, with Matthew Modine as Private Joker, who wears a Peace symbol; Vincent D'Onofrio as poor, doughy-faced Pyle; Lee Ermey as the gunnery sergeant; and Arliss Howard, Dorian Harewood, and Adam Baldwin.—P.K. (8th St. Playhouse; Sept. 6-8.)

Honeymoon in Vegas—With James Caan, Nicolas Cage, and Sarah Jessica Parker; directed by Andrew Bergman. (Reviewed in this issue.) (19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, New York Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, 62nd & Broadway, and Embassy 1.)

Howards End—James Ivory's movie version of the 1910 E. M. Forster novel is a handsome and intelligent piece of work: a faithful, well-paced, and carefully crafted dramatization of a very good story. The heroine, Margaret Schlegel (Emma Thompson), is a thirtyish Englishwoman of German ancestry who lives with her sister and her brother in a London town house. The plot brings the cultured and rather high-minded Schlegels in contact with a very different sort of fam-

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IN BRIEF–Cont'd

ily, the Wilcoxes, who appear to represent English values at their most infuriatingly solid and complacent. The emotional core of the movie is the brief, unlikely friendship that develops between Margaret and conservative Ruth Wilcox (Vanessa Redgrave), a woman who inhabits a narrow world so profoundly, and with such enormous feeling, that she transforms it. Redgrave is at her most radiant in this role. And Thompson, whose character is meant to be seen as the heir to Mrs. Wilcox's thoroughly English kind of spirituality, comes through with a thrilling, original performance; she carries the movie. These luminous performances go a long way toward putting Forster's ambitious ideas across on the screen. (Anthony Hopkins, as the no-nonsense businessman Henry Wilcox, is awfully good, too.) The story holds us for the full two hours and twenty minutes that the movie takes to tell it; Ivory and his screenwriter, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, have done a skillful and sensitive job of adaptation. All that's missing, really, is the elusive quality that makes Forster such a brave, moving writer: his constant striving to see beyond the story, to see through it, to transcend it. Also with Helena Bonham Carter, Samuel West, James Wilby, Nicola Duffett, Prunella Scales, and Adrian Ross Magenty.—T.R. (5/4/92) (Fine Arts.)

A League of Their Own—Penny Marshall's fictional account of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League has no mind of its own. Marshall directed it with both eyes on the audience. She and the screenwriting team of Lowell Ganz and Babaloo Mandel slap together a bare-bones narrative (about the league's 1943 début season) and dress it up with set-piece gags and sentimental ploys. All they want is for people to come out saying that they laughed and they cried. The lead characters are Dottie Hinson (Geena Davis) and her kid sister, Kit Keller (Lori Petty), who catch and pitch, respectively, for the Rockford Peaches and act out their sibling tensions on the baseball diamond and in the locker room. Tom Hanks mugs ingratiatingly as Jimmy Dugan, the Rockford coach and an alcoholic former slugger, and Madonna sashays through the supporting role of All the Way Mae, a ballplayer who tests the league's deportment code. This movie aims for the tear ducts and the funny bone as ruthlessly as the summer's big action-fantasy hits go after the viscera. It unfolds in field-of-dreams land—complete with cornstalks.—M.S. (7/13/92) (Village Theatre VII, Tower East, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, and Metro Cinema.)

Look Back in Anger (1959)—The English "angry young man" bursts onto the screen—an intellectual "wild one" and "rebel without a cause"—delivering some of the most electrifying dialogue of the era. Jimmy Porter (Richard Burton) is a blazingly articulate hero with passion and power, and no place in life, or cause or goal. He is an artist with no art to practice. As rancorous as Hamlet, he rages at his pale, zombie-like wife (Mary Ure), at his foxy mistress (Claire Bloom), at his good friend (Gary Raymond), and at all the dismal English life around him. The movie is uneven, and, at the end, damp and foggy as a post-war "Winterset." But it has fire. Jimmy paces like a tiger caged in the welfare state, and even if you think that the movie is basically incoherent and that he's an exhibitionist whose scorn of the heritage of the previous generation is infantile ranting, you'll have to admit that he has a voice—his abusive shouts and epigrams have the authentic ring of drama. British understatement is gone; the case is marvellously overstated. And Claire Bloom gives a wickedly smart performance; in her own way she's as sensual and knowing as Simone Signoret is in her much more sympathetic role in "Room at the Top." Also with Edith Evans, George Devine, and Donald Pleasence. Directed by Tony Richardson, from Nigel Kneale's adaptation of the landmark play by John Osborne, it's something of a mess, but this mess—and "The Entertainer," also a mess—are possibly the most exciting films to have come out of England in this period. Cinematography by Orwald Morris.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 8.)

Miss Julie (1950)—Stindberg's passionate, relentless drama of sexual debasement, directed by Alf Sjöberg. Anita Björk is the fragile, capricious, feudal aristocrat who encourages her father's valet to seduce her; she sustains the demanding role with intensity and grace. As the valet, Ulf Palme matches her performance with a surly, sly arrogance that makes his conquest of her a true degradation. The expansion of the play over considerable lyric acreage and preceding generations is ill-advised; it tends to dissipate the confined, harrowing drama. But the performances make this a powerful version, nevertheless. In Swedish.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Sept. 3.)

Night on Earth—This anthology film, written and directed by Jim Jarmusch ("Stranger Than Paradise"), has a gimmicky premise. Each of its five stories takes place in a different city, and each is about a taxicab ride. All the trips are going on at the same time, but in different time zones, so there's an illusion of temporal progress: the picture begins at sunset in Los Angeles and ends at dawn in Helsinki. (The intervening episodes take place in New York, Paris, and Rome.) It's a feeble but serviceable conceit; if the sketches were funny, we'd barely notice the preciousness of the structure. Unfortunately, the material is very thin, and the movie doesn't vary its style from sketch to sketch: Jarmusch sticks doggedly to his trademark deadpan manner. The comedian Roberto Benigni, playing a motor-mouth cabbie in the Italian episode, briefly enlivens the picture with a riotous erotic monologue. But, for the most part, the movie induces in the viewer an eerie, suspended feeling that mimics the time-stands-still monotony of a long airplane journey. It tries for a chipper, lighthearted tone, but it gives the audience a gruelling flight—a red-eye to nowhere. Also with Winona Ryder, Gena Rowlands, Giancarlo Esposito, Armin Mueller-Stahl, Rosie Perez, Isaach de Bankolé, Béatrice Dalle, and Matti Pellonpää. In English, French, Italian, and Finnish.—T.R. (5/18/92) (Angelika Film Center.)

One False Move—Skillfully performed and welcomely unpredictable, this low-budget crime film, made by actor-turned-director Carl Franklin, starts out as a herky-jerky exploitation piece, then turns into something better. After a jolting series of execution-style killings, a trio of crooks go on the lam from Los Angeles to Star City, Arkansas, where two L.A. lawmen and a local sheriff lie in wait. What saves the opening sequences is the inspired pairing of a black sociopath (Michael Beach) and a white psychopath (played by Billy Bob Thornton, who co-wrote the script with Tom Epperson). Beach's inhuman brilliance and Thornton's edgy earthiness make them deadly companions. Cynda Williams, as Thornton's African-American lover, hits on marvellous combinations of ingenuousness and amorality, even when the script plays peekaboo with motivation. Meanwhile, Star City's sheriff (Bill Paxton) tries to persuade the visiting metropolitan cops (Jim Metzler and Earl Billings) that he's ripe for big-time law enforcement. Paxton lays on the hick ingratiation, but midway through he shows how this good ole boy grows into a good ole man. Like Paxton, the movie improves as it goes along; it leaves hokum as well as wholesale carnage far behind.—M.S. (7/27/92) (Village Theatre VII, and Sutton.)

Paths of Glory (1957)—Just after he made his racetrack robbery picture "The Killing," Stanley Kubrick directed this version of Humphrey Cobb's novel, photographed in Germany. It is not so much an anti-war film as an attack on the military mind. Some of the press went all out for it ("searing in its intensity," and that sort of thing), but it wasn't popular. The movie has a fascinating jittery quality, especially when Timothy Carey, who's like a precursor of the hipster druggies of the sixties, is on the screen, and the strong, liberal-intellectual pitch makes it genuinely controversial, though it was certainly easier to be anti-militaristic in a film (made in peacetime) set during the First World War than it would have been in a film set during the Second World War. The story is about the class structure within the French army—the aristocratic generals in their spacious, sunlit châteaux and the proletarian soldiers in the dark trenches; trapped between them is Colonel Dax (Kirk Douglas), who commiserates with the men but is powerless—he carries out the orders of the high command. When the soldiers refuse to fight in a battle that is almost certain death, three of them are selected to be tried for cowardice; Dax has the task of defending them. The film's rhythm is startling—you can feel the director's temperament. And there's an element of relentlessness in the way he sets out to demonstrate the hopeless cruelty of the "system." (The film was banned in France for some years.) It's an angry film that seems meant to apply to all armies. Watching it is very frustrating: Kubrick, who wrote the script with Calder Willingham and Jim Thompson, doesn't leave you with anything. He must have felt this, because he tacks on a scene at a cabaret, with a German girl (Susanne Christian) singing and the soldiers singing along, as they weep. (It just makes you uncomfortable.) With Adophe Menjou—a cartoon of a wily general, George Macready as another general, and Ralph Meeker, Wayne Morris, Richard Anderson, Joseph Turkel, Bert Freed, Emile Meyer, Peter Capell, and John Stein.—P.K. (Tribeca Cinema; Sept. 4-5.)

The Player—The title character of Robert Altman's new movie is a young Hollywood studio executive named Griffin Mill (Tim Robbins), who, for no very good reason, murders an aspiring screenwriter. The picture is a brilliant dark comedy about the death of American filmmaking. It's like a documentary about a mirage: the world it shows us is sunlit and shimmering, and the people have the thin presence of holograms. Altman is doing one of his specialties here—exploring an odd American subculture—and when his idiosyncratic realism is applied to the insular, constantly self-regarding community of Hollywood "players" it has an almost hallucinatory effect. The movie has the exhilarating nonchalance of the director's seventies classics, and its tone is volatile, elusive: with breathtaking assurance, it veers from psychological-thriller suspense to goofball comedy to icy satire. Altman turns the self-reflective world of Hollywood into a fun house in which every grotesque distortion somehow appears to us as a newly discovered, paradoxical truth. Robbins gives a layered, richly suggestive performance—the sort of performance that Altman's style, at its best, produces without obvious effort. At sixty-seven, Altman still seems like the youngest filmmaker in America. Also with Greta Scacchi, Peter Gallagher, Fred Ward, Whoopi Goldberg, Cynthia Stevenson, Vincent D'Onofrio, Lyle Lovett, Dean Stockwell, and Richard E. Grant; dozens of movie stars (and a handful of writers) turn up in cameos. The script, by Michael Tolkin, is adapted from his own novel.—T.R. (4/20/92) (Village East Cinemas, and Cinema 3. . . . ¶ First & 62nd Cinemas. Evenings only.)

Raising Cain—Brian De Palma has created a convoluted black comedy about an unhinged child psychologist, played by John Lithgow. He is obsessive about the upbringing of his little daughter, and approaches breakdown at roughly the same time that his wife (Lolita Davidovich) falls into the arms of her ex-boyfriend (Steven Bauer). De Palma is devil-may-care about subjects that are usually treated with deathly seriousness, and he's audacious in his dislocation effects, turning what are normally flaws in a thriller—withholding information and jumping ahead of the plot—into narrative ruses that take the ground out from under a viewer's feet. But some of these flaws remain flaws. And the movie, for all its goofiness, lacks the soul of abandon that helped make De Palma's earlier suspense films wild sprees. The only way to enjoy the film is to identify not with the characters but with De Palma himself, as he raises and confounds expectations, and scatters bits of other movies (especially Michael Powell's "Peeping Tom") into a headlong pastiche. De Palma heaps everything on except his sensibility; it's like the shoot-the-works special at a pizza joint. In the best scenes, Lithgow (who plays multiple roles), Gregg Henry, Tom Bower, Barton Heyman, and Frances Sternhagen spark off each other with the casual, skit-comic humor that De Palma mastered more than twenty years ago.—M.S. (8/24/92) (Murray Hill Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ Olympia. Evenings only.)

Single White Female—The movie collapses so thoroughly between its promising introduction and its Grand Guignol conclusion that the audience exits muttering about stupidity and waste. Mainly, what's wasted is the talent of two fresh, still-growing stars, Bridget Fonda and Jennifer Jason Leigh, in the roles of twentyish out-of-towners scrambling to survive in New York City. Leigh answers

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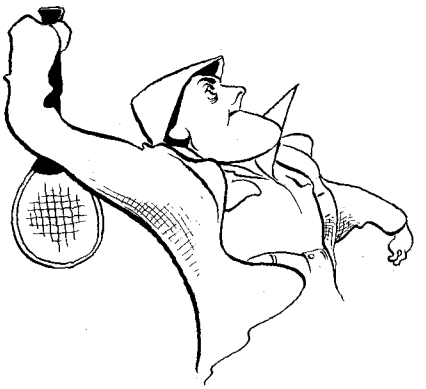
Fonda's ad for a roommate and immediately charms her way into a rent-controlled Upper West Side apartment. Virtually from the start you guess that Leigh's character plans to become Fonda's identical twin. It's merely a matter of time before this unformed young lady tries on Fonda's clothes, bearing, and hairdo, and wipes out any competition for Fonda's attention. The actresses are compelling; Leigh is particularly adept at furtive, inchoate emotions. But when the climax of a movie is inevitable, the director shouldn't delay it as long as Barbet Schroeder does. The movie is mostly just a tiresome tease.—M.S. (8/24/92) (Village Theatre VII, Bay Cinema, Beekman, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and National Twin.)

Sister Act—Whoopi Goldberg stars as a Reno lounge singer on the lam from her murderous mobster ex-lover (Harvey Keitel). Disguised as a nun in a San Francisco convent, she manages to bring new music into the choir, fresh street faces into the pews, and a social-activist spirit into the revitalized congregation. The plot and the characters are almost insultingly perfunctory (the pseudonymous Joseph Howard is credited with the script), and when there isn't any rock on the soundtrack the moviemaking is listless. Still, the director, Emile Ardolino, who made "Dirty Dancing," knows how to use sixties hits for an over-all bounce that jumps audiences past dead patches. Goldberg maintains her gruff tone, which helps keep the film from stagnating with sappiness. If Maggie Smith glowers ineffectually as the Mother Superior, a couple of actresses—Kathy Najimy and Mary Wickes—imbue their nun roles with the euphoria of inspired farceurs. (Najimy defines "overjoyed.") The film isn't a divine comedy, and it's not satisfyingly profane either. But it generates a few laughs. It's got a good beat, and you can dance to it.—M.S. (6/15/92) (Village East Cinemas, Gramercy, Cinema 3rd Avenue, Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ 86th Street East Twin. Evenings only.)

A Stranger Among Us—At least there's the kick of hearing piping-voiced Melanie Griffith refer to the Cabala as "that Jewish Kama Sutra." Griffith plays a New York cop who goes undercover in the Hasidic community to investigate a murder. She moves into the household of the Rebbe (Lee Richardson), befriends his adopted daughter (Mia Sara), and comes on to his adopted son (Eric Thal). Apart from deflecting the proposals of her hospitalized boyfriend-partner (Jamey Sheridan) and the propositions of her aggressive replacement partner (John Pankow), she doesn't do much; detective work hardly enters into Robert J. Avrech's script. There aren't even any red herrings—certainly not kosher ones, since the filmmakers share the Hasidim's view of their community as a peaceable kingdom. The director, Sidney Lumet, abetted by the cinematographer, Andrzej Bartkowiak, relentlessly aestheticizes the world of his fathers. Griffith's artless embodiment of the script's deranged idea of tough-gal gumption isn't as amusing as it should be. She's a B-picture heroine stuck in an absurdly self-conscious prestige project.—M.S. (7/27/92) (Village East Cinemas. . . . ¶ East 85th Stret. Evenings only. . . . ¶ Cinema I, and Columbus Circle; through Sept. 3.)

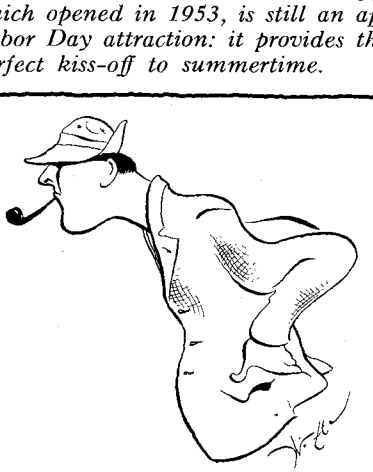
That Obscure Object of Desire (1977)—Luis Buñuel's style here is peerlessly urbane, but the film is a little monotonous. Fernando Rey plays a rich, worldly French widower of perhaps fifty, who loves a Spanish girl; she alternates between promises and postponement—she teases him, fleeces him, enrages him. She claims to love him but says, "If I gave in, you woudn't love me anymore." In this fifth movie version of "La Femme et le Pantin," Pierre Louÿs' short novel about a femme fatale, the role is played by two actresses—Carole Bouquet, a tall French girl, poker-faced except for a squint of amusement and a foxy, crooked smear of a smile, and Angela Molina, a shorter, more rounded Spanish girl, who's physically impulsive, and sensual in a traditional heavy-eyed way. This doubling-up stunt doesn't add any meaning: perhaps there's less than if there were a single actress who could capture our imagination. Buñuel sets up the Louÿs story, then treats it glancingly as a joke to hang other jokes on—and his jokes now don't have the violence underneath to make connections for us. His style is too serene for his subject. In French.—P.K. (Tribeca Cinema; Sept. 7-8.)



Jacques Tati's knack for wringing poetic comedy from the commonplace gives "Mr. Hulot's Holiday" (playing August 31-September 1, at Tribeca Cinema and September 7, at Theatre 80 St. Marks) a paradoxical charm unlike that of any other vacation movie. This chain of slapstick sketches centers on the everyday irritations that crop up at a seaside resort. Yet the film leaves an audience feeling wistful and refreshed.

Tati's rhythms are surprising—they mix languor and abruptness. The mood is set by the lengthy and droll opening crawl, which warns viewers against looking for a plot, since "a holiday is meant purely for fun." From the moment Mr. Hulot (Tati) starts motoring to the beach, his misadventures have a high exasperation quotient: his car is a quaintly sporty rattletrap, and as it rumbles over a cobbled road we experience what rattletrap really means. But Tati's touch is so airy that it tickles, even when it sensitizes us to annoyances we didn't recognize before, or that everyone learns to live with. Tati knows when to heighten his characters' frustrations and when to lay off.

Hulot himself is a slippery figure, helpful in clumsy ways, and overly determined to be merry and gallant. Even when he partially succeeds at mastering his playtime, as when he displays a vicious tennis serve, his determination tends to take the fun out of things—for him, and for his fellow-vacationers, but emphatically not for the audience. "Mr. Hulot's Holiday," which opened in 1953, is still an apt Labor Day attraction: it provides the perfect kiss-off to summertime.



Unforgiven—Set in eighteen-eighties Kansas and Wyoming, this engrossing, moody Western is the sixteenth film Clint Eastwood has directed, and by far the best. The canny script, by David Webb Peoples, revives the old story about the retired gunfighter (Eastwood) who picks up his firearms again for one last score. But there's no easy resolution, and the movie is stronger because of its loose ends: the filmmakers acknowledge that the bloody chaos of an outlaw's life can't be settled in two hours and eleven minutes. The action begins when a cowboy slashes the face of a prostitute, and her co-workers pool their money to offer a reward for the murder of him and his partner. Jaimz Woolvett is the upstart who enlists Eastwood in the bounty hunt. Morgan Freeman plays Eastwood's longtime partner, Gene Hackman a megalomaniac sheriff, Richard Harris a flamboyant English gunslinger, and Saul Rubinek a dime novelist. This is the finest set of performances ever to grace a Clint Eastwood movie, and this time Eastwood even does a good job directing Eastwood. Every bullet in this movie matters; under its leathery hide is a genuine compulsion to de-romanticize Western gunfighting.—M.S. (8/10/92) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Universal Soldier—There are a few funny notions knocking around the wreckage of this Jean-Claude Van Damme-Dolph Lundgren robodrama. In the setup—a Vietnam War massacre—Van Damme, a righteous American soldier, and Lundgren, an unhinged sergeant, kill each other when Van Damme decides to stop Lundgren's slaughter of the innocent. When they're regenerated as fighting machines, their memories are chemically suppressed, but their pasts leak into their minds anyway. Audiences who have endured two decades of self-serious post-Vietnam melodramas might enjoy seeing these two lugs bring the war back home, since they play their Vietnam-flashback nightmare as comic-book black comedy. The director, Roland Emmerich, contrasts Van Damme's dumb lassitude with the hyperactivity of a cartoon newshound heroine (frisky Ally Walker). But the movie's virtues are only relative; to get through the garish mayhem, you need a high vicarious-pain threshold.—M.S. (7/27/92) (Criterion Center.)

Unlawful Entry—Madeleine Stowe and Kurt Russell play an upwardly mobile L.A. couple; Ray Liotta is the cop who thinks he's a better man for Stowe. For about ten minutes, the movie is an effective exploitation of atavistic male pride, with class warfare mixed in. But it swiftly degenerates into another cat-and-mice thriller—and this time both the cat and, fatally, the audience are much smarter than the mice. The film is short on observation and long on jeopardy. It's what TV executives call "a Jep movie," except that in TV Jep movies the victimized woman gets to avenge herself. Here she needs the protection of her husband. Jonathan Kaplan directed the script by Lewis Colick.—M.S. (7/13/92) (Plaza. . . . ¶ Worldwide Cinemas; through Sept. 3, evenings only.)

Whispers in the Dark—The writer-director, Christopher Crowe, grapples feebly with women's sexual desires. The heroine is a shrink, played by Annabella Sciorra, and the plot is tinged with topicality: Sciorra dates and beds a ruggedly handsome aviator (Jamey Sheridan) who happens to be connected to one of her patients—a voluptuous woman named Eve (Deborah Unger). In therapy, Eve details increasingly dangerous episodes of bondage, and her stories get Sciorra so hot that she goes back into therapy herself, with her university mentor, Alan Alda. The movie's pompous trappings make its inept, desperate attention-grabbing stand out. Crowe flubs maneuvers that true horror directors know instinctively, like how to stage the heroine braining a man and not provoke the wrong kind of laughter. Unger is a good actress and a ripe sexual presence. The rest of the performers include Anthony LaPaglia as a hostile police detective, Jill Clayburgh as Alda's supportive wife, Anthony Heald as Sciorra's sad-sack ex-lover, and John Leguizamo as an unhinged artist named Fast Johnny C. Seasoned moviegoers will be able to spot Crowe's ace in the hole just from reading the credits.—M.S. (8/24/92) (19th Street East 6, and 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ Orpheum VII, and Worldwide Cinemas. Evenings only.)

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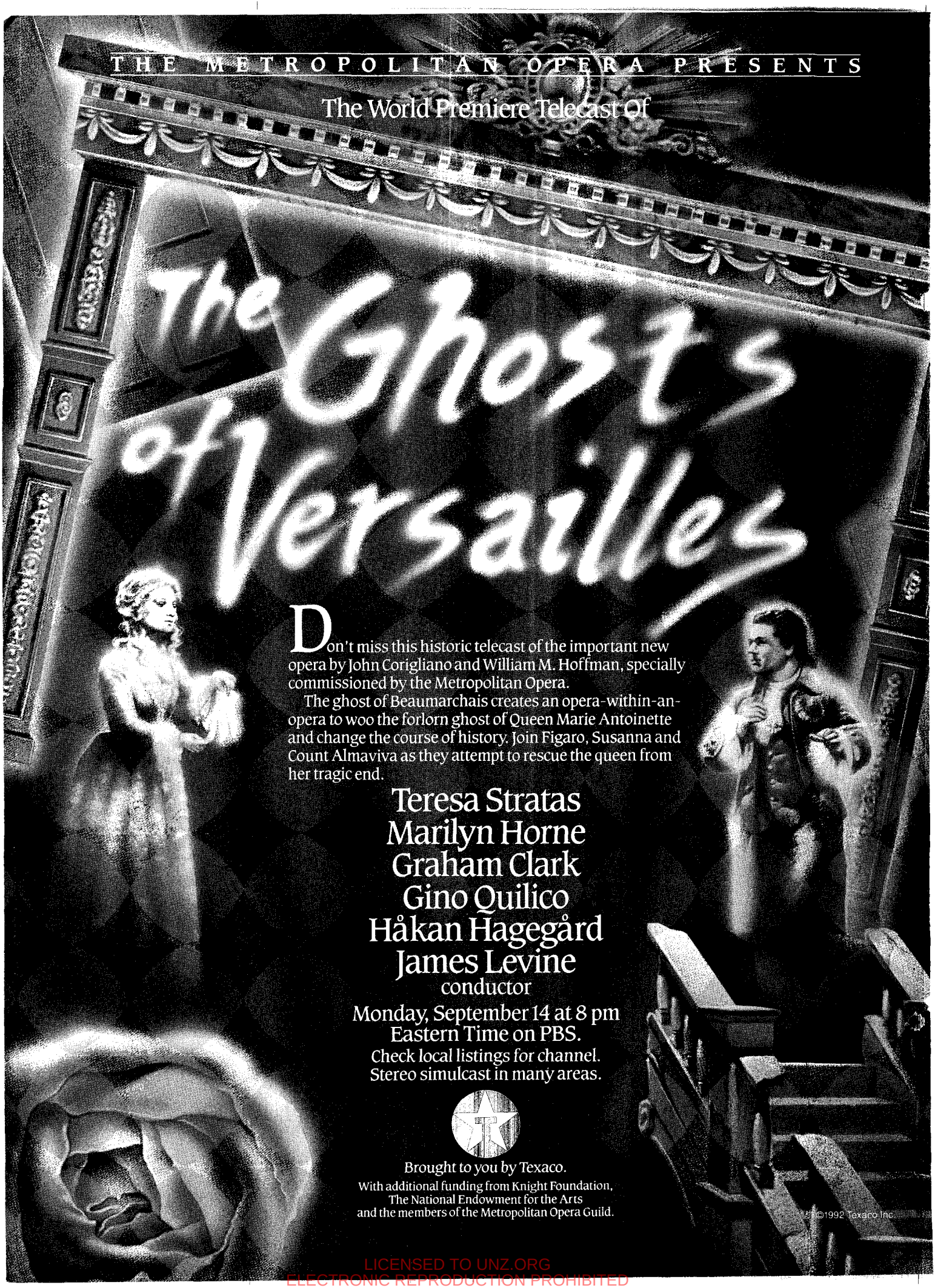
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THE NEW YORKER

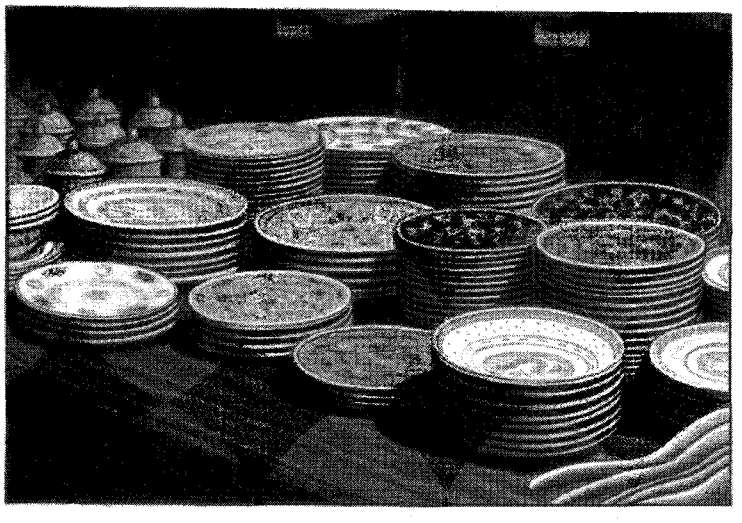
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

TO judge from everything that's been written about the Republican Convention just past, most Americans seem likely to remember it for its "negative," "divisive," and "attacking" tone. And, certainly, as a display of contempt for the basic civilities that make democratic government possible, the show in Houston is going to be hard to beat. You might think that, having seen on TV every night what happens when politics breaks down and extreme factionalism takes over, in places as different as Bosnia and southern Iraq, Americans would hardly be eager to create such an atmosphere here. Nevertheless, the Republicans (and not just the loony, fringe Republicans, either, but such sage Sunday-morning-panel-show stalwarts as William Bennett) welcomed the coming campaign as an opportunity to wage a "cultural war"—as though the premise of democratic government had not always been that politics at its best is all there is to *prevent* cultural wars.

What seemed oddest to us, though, was not the aggression that filled the Convention hall but the atmosphere of simple unreality—the disconnectedness from real experience which has in recent election years become the leitmotiv of America's political Conventions. In particular, we were struck by this Convention's assumption that history had never happened—or, at least, could always be reshaped to the political needs of the moment. Some of the historical fantasy that filled the hall has already been documented: Ronald Reagan quoting a credo (and a *Wall Street Journal* economic policy) of Lincoln which Lincoln never offered; Pat Buchanan telling the story of a confrontation between a black "mob" and two Army troopers which never took place. Almost enough right there to start a cultural war.

But the bit of non-history, or rewritten history, that struck us most sharply occurred during the President's acceptance speech. Most of the television commentators in the hall, and the newspaper commentators the next day, rated the speech the way restaurant critics rate restaurants—for flavor, presentation, atmosphere, and general appeal. No one mentioned that the speech showed the President to be a man oddly out of touch with his own experience. As the speech began, George Bush clearly wanted to present himself as someone who had experienced, and to the fullest, a historic moment: those watershed years of the Second World War and its immediate aftermath, when Nazism was defeated and the war against Communism began. His testimony concerning that time—of losing friends in battle, even of the way the stars looked from the bridge of his sub—was not just moving but also particular, exact, and personal.



Then, abruptly, he invoked, as a climax of his speech, another episode from that same period—Harry Truman's come-from-behind fight for the Presidency, in 1948. And when he spoke of this event it was as though he had not been there at all—as though the famous '48 election had happened at some distant time, in some other country. The Truman campaign was presented by Bush as a remote, inspiring historical event—something from a heroic past when Presidents were Presidents and Congresses got what was coming to them.

But, actually, not only was George Bush around in 1948, he was right in the middle of things. He was a twenty-four-year-old Yale graduate and Navy veteran (and war hero). More to the point, he was the well-known scion (there is no other word) of one of the most famous and influential Republican families in America. His father, Prescott Bush, soon to be a senator from Connecticut, was exactly the kind of big-wig Republican that Truman opposed—the kind of Wall Streeter he was giving hell to. (Truman was running against a "do-nothing" Congress whose do-nothingness involved the refusal to pass the type of social legislation that Bush now refuses to countenance.) If George Bush in 1948 didn't go all out for Thomas Dewey, then that is news, and big news. For the young

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George Bush to have chosen at that moment to turn his back on family and tradition would have been an act of principle and courage, of an even foolhardy independence, that we would be happy to hear about.

Unless, of course, George Bush did exactly what he could have been expected to do in 1948, and is now inventing an imaginary, literary 1948 to suit the needs of an important public appearance. Yet what interests us more than George Bush's invoking Truman as a model is the fact that nobody in the press has thought to ask where George was in '48. The media, too, treat the not so distant past as though it were simply a repository of inspiring myth, rather than an actual time when actual people did actual things. If we could get one moment alone with George Bush in the next month or so, we'd ask him, "Mr. President, whom did you vote for in 1948?"

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Andrew

A FRIEND writes:

At some point during that long, cool stretch of rain in August, my companion and I decided to go to Miami Beach for the weekend. We were able to book fairly cheap last-minute tickets, and on Friday found ourselves heading for the airport on a springlike and celestially beautiful New York morning.

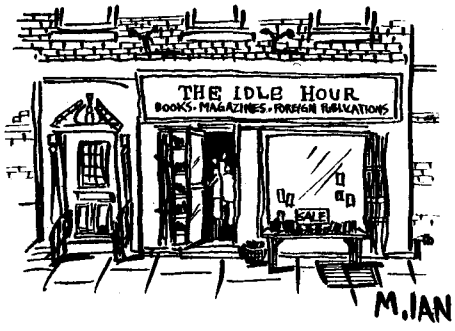
Miami, of course, was steamy, but we were happy at the Mermaid, a small "Caribbean-style" guesthouse in South Beach, where we'd stayed before. We had plenty to read and enough to wear, and had rented bikes: we were set. We heard no mention of any hurricane until late that night at a restaurant, when a friend of a friend dropped by to chat. The guy didn't really say much. He just mentioned a hurricane out at sea somewhere, which sounded pretty abstract. Ocean Drive was still teeming with people when we left, at about 1 A.M.

Saturday got off to an ideal start. We had cafe con leche at a Cuban coffee shop right off the beach, and then we picked up some breakfast tamales and tropical juices. After that, we just tooled around on our bikes. At noon, we heard a radio report that the hurricane was headed straight for Miami Beach. There was a hurricane "watch," the announcer said, and evacuation was a strong possibility. By two o'clock, when we dropped in at a folk-art gallery, evacuation was a serious topic, and as the afternoon wore on the mood turned to one of neurotic expectancy. It reminded me of New York on the day after rioting broke out in Los Angeles last May.

We had been invited to dinner with friends that night, and by the time we got to their place it seemed that the world had splintered into a couple of distinct factions. One was made up of anxious people who couldn't stop talking about the hurricane, and the other of people in advanced denial, who were getting annoyed at the people who couldn't stop worrying aloud. As my companion was setting his jaw to prepare to bark out evacuation orders, I was backing into a vaguely rebellious, squatter's attitude.

Sunday morning, clear and blazing hot, proceeded as if on fast-forward. One of us—not I—had got up shortly after dawn to call around for a room on the mainland. The "watch" had become a "warning." At nine o'clock, Ocean Drive buzzed and banged with men boarding up and taping windows, and the Strip's more thoughtful restaurateurs were rolling up their awnings. Everyone was saying that Miami Beach, along with Biscayne Bay, would be hit first and hardest, late that night. The hurricane was now being referred to—facetiously—by its given name, Andrew. By lunchtime, a slow, steady flow of departing cars had begun. Ocean Drive, now mute, was like a ghost town.

I found us a cab at around three o'clock, and we left South Beach to head west for the Doral Saturnia, an extremely fancy spa, many of whose guests had fled that morning. Our room, we were told reassuringly, had passed security clearance for Gerald and Betty Ford only months earlier, and its Jacuzzi was still functioning. So



were the miniature calorie-counting calculators glued onto menus. We attended the Saturnian dieters' last supper before all the wild stuff began. Our TV went dead at about midnight. The radio stayed on for another couple of hours. The last report was that Andrew would probably hit land by four.

Most of the people we talked to afterward agreed that the period roughly between two-thirty and five-thirty was the scariest. In our room, noise was muffled by sliding doors of thick glass, but for a good three hours I could hear what sounded like a blender on "liquefy." I had been expecting something on the order of huge thunder claps and howling, but this, rather than "angry" or theatrical, was relentless—a machine without an off switch—and imprisoning.

The way things looked on the outside was a surprise, too, although "The Wizard of Oz" does give a pretty good idea of it in the tornado scene when the witch flies past Dorothy's window on a broom. Our view was of what appeared to be the contents of a colossal ashtray turning inside a washing machine. The air was dense and sort of sludgy, as if it were full of churning charcoal dust, and periodically the effect was juiced up by rather lurid, greenish lightning. Pressed flat, as if against the washing machine's window, two palm trees seemed to be *drowning*. Their trunks, bent almost double by the wind, were as pliant as underwater ballerinas.

I fell asleep during the eye of the hurricane—around five-thirty, I think—and awoke to a keening but fairly conventional rainstorm: Andrew's lesser half. By mid-morning, the storm had subsided into a sort of wet gustiness. Surviving Doral Saturnians, along with hordes of refugee vacationers at the Doral Country Club hotel, across a golf course from us, started to pour onto the devastated fairways and greens, as if inspecting Roman ruins at Herculaneum. My companion was reminded of the scenes of melancholy people in evening dress wandering through formal gardens in "Last Year at Marienbad." Uprooted live oaks and ficus, which had been the sturdiest of the trees, lay like broccoli on a platter. Almost all the palm trees bordering allées or the open greens had been snapped in two, like pencils. Sharp

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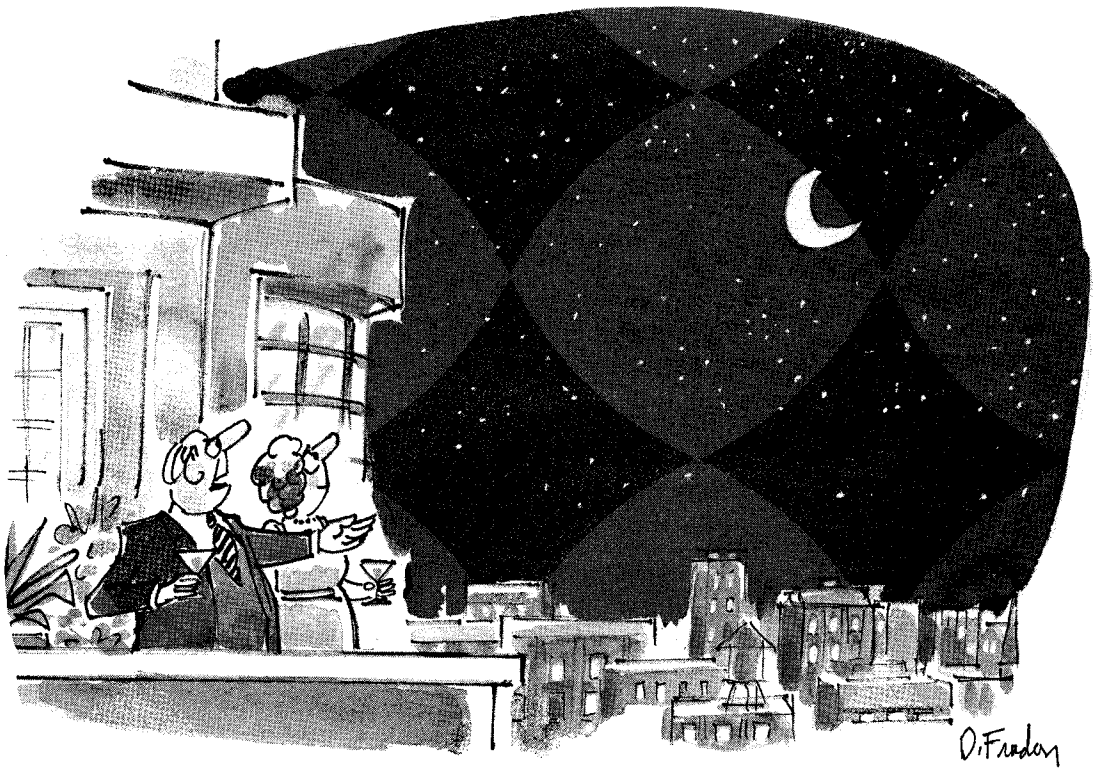
sap-yellow splinters stuck up toward a pale-gray, fast-moving sky.

The Saturnia suites were without power, of course, but the phones were working, and an emergency generator kept some lights and some reduced air-conditioning going in public rooms. Hallways were muggy, and ripe with distant bathroom smells. Early in the afternoon, a friend appeared out of nowhere to rescue us. He wanted to get back to South Beach as soon as the causeways were open, and that might be soon, he said. We drove off toward downtown Miami amid endless rows of broccoli and broken pencils, dodging downed wires, and at one point hurtling over a traffic divider at an exit blocked by a felled tree with enormous shaggy roots. For the next four hours, we trawled up and down Biscayne Boulevard for a usable causeway. The big downtown hotels were shut. *Everything* was shut. Most office buildings were missing windows. Here and there, people were wandering around on foot with minicams—shooting damage for insurance claims, we guessed. During our second trawl along Biscayne, we could see arms sticking out of tiny grocery stores and bodegas, passing bottles to people clustered outside. The third time around, at about five-thirty, we managed to get across the Kennedy Causeway, at Seventy-ninth Street.

The tree situation on Miami Beach was disastrous. Large falling trees had even yanked chunks of sidewalk up with their roots. Traffic lights were lying in the middle of streets with their wires dangling; thirty-foot street lamps lay cantilevered over curbs; condominium roadside placards were strewn, mangled, in driveways; and lots of giant picture windows were out, gone. On Ocean Drive, awnings that had been left unrolled were now huge, twisted paper clips festooned with rags.

But this was not South Dade. The buildings along Collins were standing and were basically O.K. In fact, the more we looked around at the boarded-up hotels, battered shops, and littered sidewalks, the more it seemed that the whole place had simply reverted to its old, neglected self—to the days before everyone suddenly remembered that it was "Deco," and the model agencies, record companies, and SoHo restaurants came to town.

We had made it back to South Beach in time for the seven-o'clock curfew.



"Do you know why the universe works so well? God runs it like a business, that's why."

• •

Glitch

EVERY now and then, when we feel unaccountably optimistic, we call the Glitch telephone network to remind ourself just how depressing things really are. The network, which can be reached at (212) 228-7514, is a call-in service that casts a glaring light each week on some dark alley that science is currently leading us down. In the past several months, Glitch has alerted us to the hazards of computer technology, the vulnerability of telephone privacy, and the folly of the high-speed chase.

Recently, after listening to a Glitch report that explained why NASA's proposed space station is an invitation to failure, we left a message for whoever was running the service, and the next day Janet Pensig returned our call. Glitch, it turns out, is Ms. Pensig's answering machine. "I began putting on the messages in March of 1991," she told us. "I advertised the service in the *Village Voice* and sent a release to the news bureaus. I hoped to create a place that people could call to find out just where science is taking them. I also envisioned people leaving messages relating their own horror stories—the insubordinate appliance, the computer that follows its own command. But no one leaves messages. Either everyone's satisfied or people are so demoralized they don't even want to talk."

Ms. Pensig, a thirty-nine-year-old Brooklyn-born woman who attended New York University and now lives in Manhattan, is deeply pessimistic about the future. Machines and computers, she says, have reached such a level of complexity that no one can understand them, let alone control them. "Things go wrong and it's like warning lights flashing in foreign tongues," she says. "We can't even manage our own creations." To call Ms. Pensig is to plug into a steady current of foreboding: closing parameters, industrial accidents, ecological disasters. As a

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scientific expert, Ms. Pensig is largely self-taught, and she shares her knowledge in an excited voice, speaking with the sort of New York street staccato we've long associated with crumbling infrastructures.

We asked Ms. Penisg if we could meet her. "That's out of the question," she said sharply. "This isn't about me or what I look like or who I am. It's about certain ugly trends that haunt the American landscape. Besides, my preferred means of communication has always been the telephone." She doesn't know how she would express herself were it not for her answering machine, she explained. "I use the device as if it were an electronic message wall—easy for people to access, inexpensive to run. Sometimes I worry I'll have nothing bad to talk about, but, fortunately, grave things keep coming up."

Many mornings, Ms. Pensig takes the subway (which, interestingly, she still trusts) to the New York Public Library, and there she photocopies anything she comes across that looks in some way ominous or threatening. Last month, when she read in the *Wall Street Journal* that businessmen were spending entire flights in airplane lavatories with computers on their laps to make use of electrical outlets, she devoted an afternoon to hunting down the story's every detail. "Sitting in an airplane bathroom for three or four hours isn't normal behavior," she said. "And that's exactly why I'm interested in it: something odd is unfolding, and the first signs of it can be caught in this sort of activity."

Ms. Pensig says she's equipped for recognizing the portents of doom in a way that others are not. "I can see what's going wrong with science because I was a believer myself," she said. "I believed in progress, and that it would soon deliver solutions to all our problems. I still see things in those terms: I may say that a thing runs as smoothly as a factory or that a person works as well as a machine. Despite this, I lost faith some time ago. I've come to realize that computers are starting to make all the decisions. They may be intended to make things easy, but they're really just taking control. Think of the spell-check device that comes with so many computers," she said. "This thing's supposed to make life easy—correct misspelled words—but what it really does is hand over editorial control. If you want to be creative—want to write like T. S. Eliot, coin a new word—the spell-check won't let you. It allows only words it recognizes. In the process of correcting, it flattens out sentences and smooths down ideas."

When we suggested she avoid spell-check technology altogether, Ms. Pensig brought up self-tinting windows.

"This new type of glass automatically tints when the temperature reaches a certain point, and if it happens to be the glass of your office windows there's no way to avoid it," she said. "Let's say it's hot outside but you still want to see the sun. Too bad. The windows don't ask permission—they just tint. There's nothing to be done about the tyranny of the machine. We're ceding power to a bunch of fascist windows, and all we can do is sit and watch the sun go away."

Ms. Pensig fell silent. We could hear the crackling static of the telephone line, and suddenly we felt unexpectedly close to her—as if the two of us had suffered a tragedy together. We suggested that we talk more over lunch.

"You can't talk while you eat," she said. "That's how people choke to death. Why do you think Heimlich-maneuver signs are plastered all over restaurants? Because people still think they can have it both ways."

We knew that she was right—that a meeting was impossible, and we would never know the true face of doom—so we just thanked her for her time and told her that we now felt much worse.

Irresistible

SHORTY had been destined for success ever since he was born. Well, not born, exactly. Hatched. Shorty is a Burmese python; he just turned eight, and he's thirteen feet long. Tasia Echevarria has another Burmese python, Tiny, who is only five, and already she's ten feet long. Shorty and Tasia are out at Coney Island almost every weekend, working the boardwalk just south of Deno's Snack Bar. Deno's loves Tasia and Shorty—because, Tasia explains, "we make a crowd and then Deno's does a business." Tasia makes the crowd by posing people with Shorty and taking snapshots of them for a five-dollar donation. Sometimes Tasia and the snake also work near the kiddie rides at Astroland, and sometimes, if things get slow, they even go down to the sand.

The question that people always ask Tasia right off is how she got started with snakes. We'll tell you. Tasia got Shorty from Liberty Pets, in Brooklyn, back in 1985. Actually, her husband, William (he was only her boyfriend then), went down to Liberty Pets to buy a tarantula for a Valentine present, but when he got to the store he found that it was out of tarantulas. William said to himself, "Let me get a little snake."

Shorty was irresistible, and he cost only a hundred and forty dollars. In Tasia's estimation, he's worth at least fifteen thousand dollars by now. After all, he's a fully trained working snake. Look at what he did in December. In December, Shorty was part of a fantasy shoot in *Vogue*, with Linda Evangelista playing Peter Pan, and Mark Morris playing Cap-

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tain Hook. Shorty played himself. Since then, he's been in two French movies; he's done a fashion shoot with a model called Tatiana; he's done a photo grouping with a nineteen-fifties girl group called the Chantels; and he's been draped around the Jamaican model Naomi Campbell's neck. Putting a price on Shorty's head is ridiculous, though, because Tasia Echevarria would never, never sell him. "Are you kidding?" she says. "My kids would kill me first."

The family now has six snakes—Shorty and Tiny, their two babies, and two boa constrictors. When Tasia started taking Shorty to the beach, seven years ago, it was just for the outing: she wanted to give him a breath of sea air. But people kept wanting to take pictures. First, it was pictures of Tasia with the snake, then it was pictures of themselves and Tasia with the snake, and then it was pictures of them with the snake, no Tasia. Finally, Tasia said to her husband, "Why don't we get our own camera? We could make a little money off this." Tasia bought a Spectra instant camera, and now she's raking it in. "How much do we make?" Tasia says. "Good money. A lot. I don't like to say."

Nevertheless, Tasia and William, their five kids, and the snakes live modestly in a project out by the Belt Parkway. The snakes range loose in the apartment, of course. "They go all over," Tasia says. "They climb in bed, on the china cabinet. They'll climb up to the ceiling if I let them."

Tasia does much of the training herself. She started by putting Shorty on her daughter Alyssa's neck, and then she began to take Alyssa out with Shorty in the stroller when Alyssa was just an infant. For a long time, Shorty slept in the crib with Alyssa, who's four now, but eventually he got too large.

Once, in a marketing experiment, Tasia got a monkey. If snake pictures were hot, she figured, then monkey pictures were bound to go over big. But she ran into an unexpected problem: Shorty wanted to eat the monkey. "The monkey knew this, and he was constantly living in fear," she says. "I went out to the store one time, and you know Shorty can open doors, right? He opened the door to where the monkey was, and he was trying to squeeze through the cage."

Although Shorty is more than twice as long as a man and is covered with banded scales, in many ways he's just like a kid. That's how Tasia sees it. She takes him on outings. He gets petted all the time. He eats much better than he would in the wild. Every two weeks, both Shorty and Tiny consume two ten-pound rabbits, which Tasia buys at a live-poultry place on Pitkin Avenue. Most people would feed a snake of Shorty's size just once a month, but Tasia prefers to keep her snakes slightly overfed, because, as she puts it, "I don't want them opening their mouths except to eat."

After Tasia became successful, a lot of people formed the idea that snake pictures were a good way to make a quick buck. The return on the initial investment looked good. "Snakes are cheap, right?" Tasia says. "So everyone with two hundred dollars got a snake." But the competitors' snakes weren't trained as well as Shorty. They threw up on people. They bit. "I knew a woman who was scaring kids on purpose," Tasia says. "She went up to them and said, 'Who's my next victim?' She thought it was funny. She was putting the snake right in the kids' faces." Tasia herself is a businesswoman, and, as such, she has a strict policy. Her policy is: If it's thirteen feet and aggressive, you don't take it out. "Seriously," she says, "people want a snake they can trust."

JAMES BOND:
THE CUTBACK YEARS

Buys all electronic gadgetry on West 47th Street.
Excuse me, sir. What's the price of this cellular phone? Sir?
Has switched from Martinis to jug wine.
ACME VINEGAR
Carpools with other spies.
Avoids the casinos; has found new pastimes.
BINGO!

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FRISCO SHIFT SPARKS HEGIRA FLURRY

NEWS that the San Francisco Giants baseball team plans to relocate to the balmier precincts of St. Petersburg, Florida, and that Germany's BMW AG will begin building automobiles in industry-friendly South Carolina was overshadowed today when city fathers announced that Cleveland, Ohio, will exchange its chilly Lake Erie habitat for sunny California and move to the facilities near Anaheim occupied for the past thirty-seven years by Disneyland, now that the renowned theme park has confirmed "an agreement in principle" to seek even more visitors annually by transferring operations to the tourist mecca and transport hub of metropolitan Washington, D.C., at the current site of the White House, storied residence of Presidents, which senior officials have confirmed will follow America's long-term population shift to the asthma-and-congestion-free Sun Belt, to replace the previously transplanted London Bridge as a major sightseeing attraction near popular Lake Havasu, Arizona—a move made possible by the disclosure that London Bridge is being trucked east to become the largest man-made outdoor spectacle in what was formerly the nation's tiniest state, Rhode Island, whose Governor, stating that after three hundred and fifty-six years "it's just time for a change," has signed into law a move to Puget Sound, water wonderland of the Pacific Northwest, blessed with a well-trained, can-do work force, as soon as Puget Sound, capping months of delicate negotiations, signs a thousand-year lease on land in water-thirsty western Nebraska, thus confounding insiders' predictions that Hollywood, was about to sign an agreement to shift its own operations to the land-rich Cornhusker State, when in fact, according to a statement released in a hastily called press conference, the world motion-picture capital opted instead to trade locations with Donald Trump's politically embattled Upper West Side office-and-apartment megaproject in Manhattan, as soon as Trump representatives can terminate a non-binding preliminary agreement to raze Candlestick Park and build there shortly after the current tenant, the San Francisco Giants, makes its aforementioned move to St. Petersburg.

The word of these developments has affected the lives of thousands across the country. "The year-round golf, boating, and recreational facilities are topnotch," commented a jubilant Niles Boyd, forty-six, in announcing that he will shortly move his family from rainy Salem, Oregon, to historic Annapolis, Maryland, and rename them the Chesapeake Bay Boyds. Meanwhile, with the implications of the Boyds' move in mind, the mayors of Utica, Troy, and Syracuse, three cites in upstate New York, have revealed plans to merge into a single municipal entity that will be called New Athens and to relocate at the site formerly occupied by the I.B.M. Corporation in Armonk, New York, upon completion of I.B.M.'s surprise removal to the sprawling South Texas property previously known as the King Ranch. When pressed to elaborate on the reasons for the unexpected uprooting of his family after twenty-two "very happy years" in the Salem area, Mr. Boyd pointed out that the Chesapeake Bay area "boasts just about everything the sportsman and sportswoman dream about" in terms of the ideal location for growth in the nineties, high quality of education, plentiful parking accommodations, and a stable tax base—"without either the frigid winds constantly blowing in off the Bay or the sometimes oppressive summer humidity of central Florida"—and stressed that the move was in no way connected with the upcoming relocation of the Statue of Liberty from lightly visited New York Harbor to the end of busy Runway 22R at John F. Kennedy International Airport twelve miles east, on Long Island, or with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir's abrupt decision to become the Ottawa Senators expansion franchise in the National Hockey League, which Choir spokespersons strenuously denied was in any way related to Salt Lake City's stated intention to apply for a place on NASA's first settlement expedition to Venus. "We're grateful for the support of the people of Salem over the years," Mr. Boyd told reporters, "but all of life is a process of change and new challenges. And this is a once-in-a-lifetime challenge. With its long tradition of hospitality, its handy access to road, rail, and air transportation, and its supportive pro-family environment, not to mention hunting and fishing second to none, Chesapeake Bay is the place. There's no reason to go anywhere else."

—BRUCE MCCALL

"Your generous donation," said the Dodo, "will help us in our quest to find a cure for extinction."

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GREAT BARRIER REEF

THE motel had smelled of cinder block and cement floor, and was full of Australian senior citizens off a motor coach, but when we woke up in the morning a little less jet-lagged, and from the balcony could see the bed of a tidal river, with ibis and herons poking along the shallows, and giant ravens and parrots in the trees—trees strangling with Monstera vines, all luridly beautiful—we felt it would be all right. But then, when we went along to the quay, I felt it wouldn't. The ship, the Dolphin, was smaller than one could have imagined. Where could sixteen passengers possibly sleep? Brown stains from rusted drainspouts spoiled the hull. Gray deck paint splattered the ropes and ladders, orange primer showed through the chips. Wooden crates of lettuce and cabbages and a case of peas in giant tin cans were stacked on the deck. This cruise had been J.'s idea, so I tried not to seem reproachful, or shocked, at the tiny, shabby vessel. But I am not fond of travel in the best of circumstances—inconvenient displacements punctuated by painful longings to be home. For J., travel is natural opium.

J. was on his way to a meeting in Singapore of the International Infectious Disease Council, a body of eminent medical specialists from different lands who are charged with making decisions about diseases. Should the last remaining smallpox virus be destroyed? What was the significance of a pocket of polio in Sri Lanka? Could leprosy be finished off with a full-bore campaign in the spring? Was tuberculosis on the way back now via AIDS? What about measles in the Third World? I had not realized until I took up with J. that these remote afflictions were still around, let alone that they killed people in the millions. A professor of medicine, J. did research on things that infected the lungs.

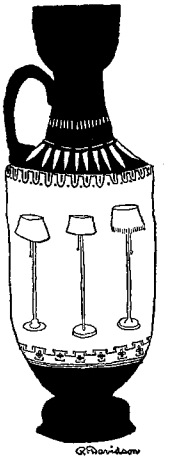
He had always longed to visit the Great Barrier Reef, and afterward would give some lectures in Sydney and Wellington, and we planned to indulge another whim en route—skiing in New Zealand in the middle of summer, just to say we'd skied in August and as a bribe to me to come along, for I will go anywhere to ski, it is the one thing. For me the voyage was one of escape from California after some difficult times, and was to be—this was unspoken by either of us—a sort of trial honeymoon (though we were not married) on which we would discover whether we were suited to live together by subjecting ourselves to that most serious of tests, travelling together.

A crewman named Murray, a short, hardy man with a narrow Scots face and thick Aussie accent, showed us our stateroom. It had been called a stateroom in the brochure. Unimaginably small. J. couldn't stand up all the way in it. Two foam mattresses on pallets suspended from the wall, and a smell. The porthole was seamed with salt and rust. Across the passage, the door of another stateroom was open, but that one was a large, pretty room, with mahogany and nautical brass fittings and a desk, and the portholes shone. It was the one, certainly, that had been pictured in the brochure.

"This one here, the Royal, was fitted for Prince Charles, Prince of Wales, when he come on this voyage in 1974," Murray said.

"How do you book the Royal?" I asked.

"First come, first served," Murray said. Australian, egalitarian, opposed to privilege.



Up on deck, thinking of spending five days on the Dolphin, I began to be seized by feelings of panic and pain I couldn't explain. They racketed about in my chest, my heart beat fast, I felt as if a balloon were inflating inside me, squeezing up tears and pressing them out of my eyes and thrusting painful words up into my throat, where they lodged. What was the matter with me? Usually I am a calm person (I think); five days is not a lifetime; the aesthetics of a mattress—or its comfort—is not a matter for serious protests. A smell of rotten water sloshing somewhere inside the hull could be gotten used to. Anyone could eat tinned peas five days and survive, plenty of people in the world were glad to get tinned peas. I knew all that. I knew I wasn't reacting appropriately, and was sorry for this querulous fit of passion. Maybe it was only jet lag.

All the same, I said to J., "I just can't," and stared tragically at the moorings. He knew, of course, that I could and probably would, but he maintained an attitude of calm sympathy.

"You've been through a rough time," he said. "It's the court thing you're really upset about." Maybe so. The court thing, a draining and frightening custody suit, had only been a week ago, and now here we were a hemisphere away.

The other passengers came on board, one by one or two by two. Cases clattered on the metal gangs. To me, only one person looked possible—a tall, handsome, youngish man with scholarly spectacles and a weathered yachting cap. The rest were aged and fat, plain, wore shapeless brown or navy-blue coat-sweaters buttoned over paunches, had gray perms and bald spots, and they all spoke in this accent I disliked, as if their vowels had been slammed in doors. They spoke like cats, I thought: *eeeoooow*. Fat Australians, not looking fond of nature, why were they all here?

"Why are these people here?" I complained to J. "What do they care about the Great Barrier Reef?"

"It's a wonder of the world, anyone would want to see it," J. said, assuming the same dreamy expression he always wore when talking or thinking about the Great Barrier Reef, so long the object of his heart.

I hated all the other passengers. On a second inspection, besides the youngish man, only a youngish couple, Dave and Rita, looked promising, but then I was infuriated to learn that Dave and Rita were Americans—we hadn't come all this way to be cooped up for five days in a prison of an old Coast Guard cutter with other Americans—and, what was worse, Rita and Dave had drawn the Prince Charles cabin, and occupied it as if by natural right, Americans expecting and getting luxury.

Of course, I kept these overwrought feelings to myself. No Australian complained. None appeared unhappy with the ship; no satirical remark, no questioning comment marred their apparent delight with the whole shipshape of things—the cabins, even the appalling lunch, which was under way as soon as the little craft set out,

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pointing itself east, toward the open sea, from Mackay Harbor.

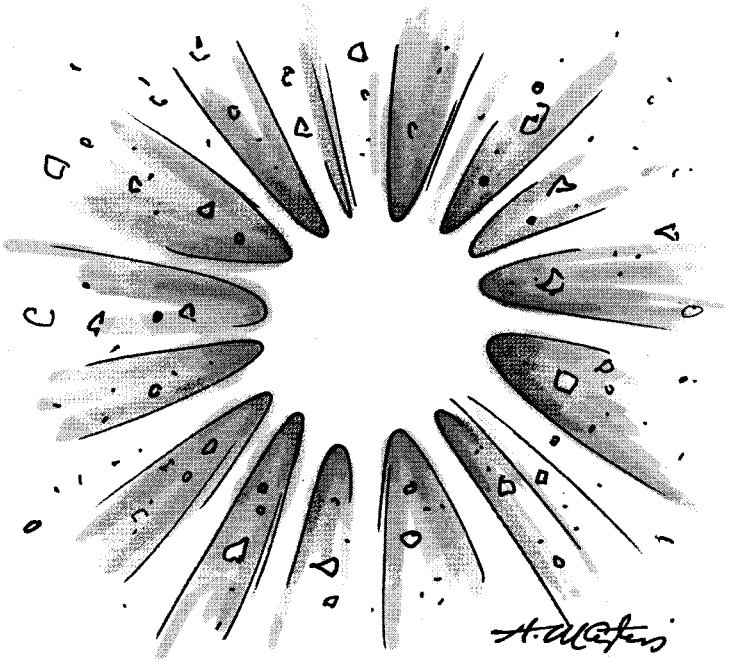
After we lost sight of land, my mood of desperate resentment did not disappear, as J. had predicted, but deepened. It was more than the irritability of a shallow, difficult person demanding comfort, it was a failure of spirit, inexplicable and unwarranted on this bright afternoon. How did these obese Australian women, these stiff old men, clamber so uncomplainingly belowdecks to their tiny cells, careen along the railings, laughing crazily as they tripped on ropes? Doubtless one would fall and the voyage would be turned back. When I thought of the ugliness of the things I had just escaped from—the unpleasant divorce, the custody battle, the hounding of lawyers and strangers—only to find myself in such a place as this, really unmanageable emotions made me turn my face away from the others.

Dinner was tinned peas, and minted lamb overdone to a gray rag, and potatoes. J. bought a bottle of wine from the little bar, which the deckhand Murray nimbly leaped behind, transforming himself into waiter or bartender as required. We sat with the promising young man, Mark, and offered him some wine, but he said he didn't drink wine. He was no use; he was very, very prim, a bachelor civil servant from Canberra, with a slight stammer, only handsome and young by some accident, and would someday be old without changing, would still be taking lonely cruises, eating minted lamb, would still be unmarried and reticent. He had no conversation, had never been anywhere, did not even know what we wanted from him. Imagining his life, I thought about how sad it was to be him, hoping for whatever he hoped for but not hoping for the right things, content to eat these awful peas, doomed by being Australian, and even while I pitied him I found him hopeless. Even J., who could talk to anyone, gave up trying to talk to him, and, feeling embarrassed to talk only to each other as if he weren't there, we fell silent and stared out the windows at the rising moon along the black horizon of the sea.

There didn't seem a way, in the tiny cabin, for two normal-sized people to exist, let alone to make love; there was no space that could accommodate two bodies in any position. Our suitcases filled half the room. With our summer clothing, our proper suits to wear in Wellington and Sydney, and bulky ski clothes of quilted down, we were ridiculously encumbered with baggage. It seemed stupid now. We were obliged to stow our bags and coats precariously on racks overhead, our duffelbags sleeping at the feet of our bunks like lumpy interloper dogs. J. took my hand comfortingly in the dark, across the space between the two bunks, before he dropped off to sleep; I lay awake, seized with a terrible fit of traveller's panic, suffocating with fearful visions of fire, of people in prison cells or confined in army tanks, their blazing bodies emerging screaming from the holds of ships to writhe doomed on the ground, their stick limbs ringed in flame, people burned in oil splashed on them from the holds of rusted ships, and smells of underground, smells of sewers, the slosh of engine fuel from the hell beneath.

AS is so often the traveller's fate, nothing on the cruise was as promised or as we had expected. The seedy crew of six had tourist-baked smiles and warmed-over jokes. There was a little faded captain who climbed out of his tower to greet us now and then, and a sort of Irish barmaid, Maureen, who helped Murray serve the drinks. The main business of the passage seemed not to be the life of the sea or the paradise of tropical birds on Pacific shores or the balmy water but putting in at innumerable islands to look at souvenir shops. J., his mind on the Great Barrier Reef, which we were expected to reach on the fourth day, sweetly bore it all, the boredom and the endless stops at each little island, but I somehow couldn't conquer my petulant dislike.

It fastened, especially, on our shipmates. Reluctantly, I learned their names, in order to detest them with more precision: Don and Donna from New Zealand, Priscilla from Adelaide—portly, harmless old creatures, as J. pointed out. Knowing that the derisive remarks that sprang to my lips only revealed me as petty and complaining to good-natured J., I didn't speak them aloud. But it seemed to me that these Australians only wanted to travel to rummage in the souvenir shops, though these were all alike from island to island: Daydream Island, Hook Island—was this a cultural or a generation gap? I brooded on the subject of souvenirs: why they should exist, why people should want them, by what law they were made ugly—shells shaped like toilets, a row of swizzlesticks in the shapes of women's silhouetted bodies, thin, fatter, fat, with bellies and breasts increasingly sagging as they graduated from "Sweet Sixteen" to "Sixty." I was unsettled to notice that the one depicting a wom-



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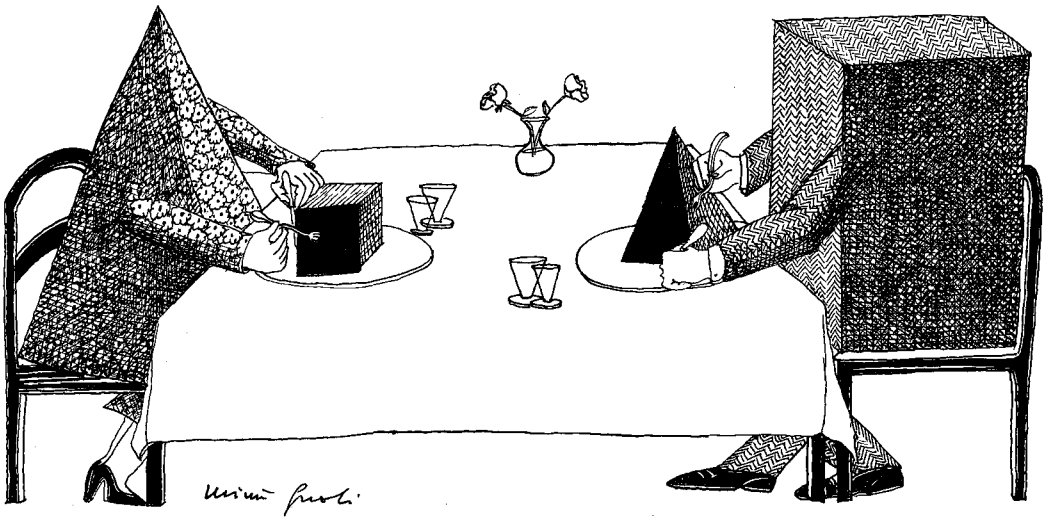
an of my age had a noticeably thickened middle. I watched a man buy a fat one and hand it to his wife. "Here, Mother, this one's you," he said. Laughter a form of hate. It was not a man from our ship, luckily, or I would have pushed him overboard. I brooded on my own complicity in the industry of souvenirs, for didn't I buy them myself? The things I bought—the tasteful (I liked to think) baskets and elegant textiles I was always carting home—were these not just a refined form of souvenir for a more citified sort of traveller?



"This tastes like home cooking."

• •

Statuettes of drunken sailors, velvet pictures of island maidens, plastic seashell lamps made in Taiwan. What contempt the people who think up souvenirs have for other people! Yet our fellow-passengers plunked down money with no feeling of shame. They never walked on the sand or looked at the colors of the bright patchwork birds rioting in the palm trees. Besides us, only the other Americans, Rita and Dave, did this. It was Dave who found the perfect helmet shell, a regular treasure, the crew assured them, increasingly rare, protected even—you weren't supposed to carry them away, but who was looking? I wanted it to have been J. who got it.

Each morning, each afternoon, we stopped at another island. This one was Daydream Island. "It's lovely, isn't it, dear?" Priscilla said to me. "People like to see a bit of a new place, the shopping, they have different things to make it interesting." But it wasn't different, it was the same each day: the crew hands the heavy, sacklike people, grunting, down into rowboats, and hauls them out onto a sandy slope of beach. Up they trudge toward a souvenir shop. This one had large shells perched on legs, and small shells pasted in designs on picture frames, and earrings made of shells, and plastic buckets, and plastic straw hats surrounded with fringe, and pictures of hula dancers.

"I don't care, I do hate them," I ranted passionately to J. "I'm right to hate them. They're what's the matter with the world, they're ugly consumers, they can't look at a shell unless it's coated in plastic, they never look at the sea—why are they here? Why don't they stay in Perth and Adelaide—you can buy shells there, and swizzlesticks in the shape of hula girls." Of course J. hadn't any answer for this, of course I was right.

I wandered onto a stretch of beach and took off my shoes, planning to wade. Whenever I was left alone I found myself harking back to the court hearing, my recollections just as sharp and painful as a week ago. I couldn't keep from going over and over my ordeal, and thinking of my hated former husband, or not really him so much as his lawyer, Waxman, a man in high-heeled boots and aviator glasses. I imagined him here in these waters. He has fallen overboard off the back of the ship. I am the only one to notice, and I have the power to cry out for his rescue but I don't. Our eyes meet; he is down in the water, still wearing the glasses. I imagine his expression of surprise when he realizes that I'm not going to call for help. What for him had been a mere legal game, a job, would cost him his life. He had misjudged me. The ship speeds along. We are too far away to hear his cries.

IT was the third day, and we had set down at Happy Island. Here we had to wade across a sandbar. This island had goats grazing. "This is the first we've gotten wet," I bitterly complained. We stood in ankle-deep water amid queer gelatinous seaweed. I had wanted to swim, to dive, to sluice away the court and the memories, but hadn't been permitted to, because these waters, so innocently beautiful, so seductively warm, were riddled with poisonous creatures, deadly toxins, and sharks.

"Be careful not to pick up anything that looks like this," Murray warned, showing us a harmless-looking little shell. "The deadly cone shell. And the coral, be careful a' that, it scratches like hell. One scratch can take over a year to heal. We have some ointment on board, be sure to tell one of the crew if you scratch yourself."

From here, I looked back at the ship, and, seeing the crew watching us, I suddenly saw ourselves, the passengers, with the crew's eyes: we were a collection of thick bodies, mere cargo to be freighted around, slightly volatile, likely to ferment, like damp grain, and to give trouble—difficult cargo that boozed, sent you scurrying unreasonably on tasks, got itself cut on coral, made you laugh at its jokes. I could see that the crew must hate us.

Yet, a little later, I came upon Murray tying on a fishhook for old George, whose fingers were arthritic. Murray was chatting to him with a natural smile. I studied them. Perhaps Murray by himself was a man of

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simple good nature, but the rest, surely, hated us. The captain, staring coolly out from his absurd quarterdeck, made no pretense of liking us, seemed always to be thinking of something else, not of this strange Pacific civilization of Quonset huts and rotting landing barges and odd South Sea denizens strangely toothless, beyond dentistry, beyond fashion, playing old records over and over on P.A. systems strung through the palms. You felt the forlornness of these tacky little islands that should have been beautiful and serene. I even wondered if we would ever get back to America. Not that I wanted to. America was smeared with horrible memories, scenes of litigation. Why shouldn't J. and I simply stay here? Why, more important, was I not someone who was able, like the lovely goat that grazed on the slope near here, to gaze at the turquoise sea and enjoy the sight of little rose-colored parrots wheeling in the air? Why was I not, like a nice person, simply content to *be*, to enjoy beauty and inner peace? Instead I must suffer, review, quiver with fears and rages—the fault, I saw, was in myself, I was a restless, peevish, flawed person. How would I be able to struggle out of this frame of mind? Slipping on the sandy bank, I frightened the little goat.

By the third day I began to notice a sea change in our shipmates, who had begun in sensible gabardines and print dresses, but now wore violently floral shirts and dresses, and were studded with shells—wreaths of shells about their necks and at their ears, hats embroidered with crabs and gulls. By now I knew a bit more about them. They were all travellers. George and Nettie, Fred and Polly had been friends for forty years, and spent a part of each year, now that they were all retired, travelling in Europe in their caravans. Dave and Rita were both schoolteachers, and Rita raised Great Danes. Priscilla was going along on this cruise with her brother Albert, because Albert had just lost his wife. Mark was taking his annual vacation. Don and Donna were thinking of selling their Auckland real-estate business, buying a sailboat to live on, and circumnavigating the globe. J. told me that George was a sensitive and sweet man who had lived his whole life in Australia, and only now in his retirement had begun to see something of the world. "And he says that the most beautiful place on earth is some place near Split, in Yugoslavia, and if I take you there, my darling, will you for God's sake cheer up now?" But I couldn't.

Tonight we were dining ashore, in a big shed on Frenchie's Island, a shabby tin building. Music was already playing on loudspeakers. Groups of people from other ships, or hotels, strolled around carrying drinks. A smell of roasted sausages, someone singing "Waltzing Matilda" in the kitchen at the back. The Dolphin passengers were lined up at the bar and in the souvenir shop. In the big hangar of a room little tables encircled a dance floor, and at one end a microphone stood against a photo mural of the South Seas, as if the real scene outdoors were not sufficiently evocative. The sun lowered across the pink water, setting in the east, and the water in the gentle lagoon was as warm as our blood. "I wish a hurricane would come and blow it all away," I said to J.

When the diners had tipped their paper plates into a bin, they began to sing old American songs. Sitting outside, I could hear Maureen singing "And Let Her Sleep Under the Bar." Then came canned music from a phonograph, and people began to dance—the ones who were not too decrepit. I tried to hear only the chatter of the monkeys or parrots in the palm trees, innocent creatures disturbed by the raucous humans. J. was strangely cheerful and shot some pool with a New Zealander, causing me all of a sudden to think, with a chill of disapproval, that J. possibly was an Australian at heart and that I ought not to marry him or I would end up in a caravan in Split. His good looks and professional standing were only a mask that concealed . . . simplicity.

It didn't surprise me that people liked the handsome and amiable J.; it didn't even surprise me that they seemed to like me. I had concealed my tumult

IN THE NIGHT WITHOUT END

I

In the night without end, in the soaking dark,
I am wearing a white suit that shines
Among the black leaves falling, among

The insect-covered moons of the street lamps.
I am walking among the emerald trees
In the night without end. I am crossing

The street and disappearing around the corner.
I shine as I go through the park on my way
To the station where the others are waiting.

Soon we shall travel through the soundless dark,
With fires guiding us over the bitter terrain
Of the night without end. I am wearing

A suit that outdoes the moon, that is pure sheen
As I come to the station where the others
Are whispering, saying that the moon

Is no more a hindrance than anything else,
That, if the pain is great, wings can be bought
For a song or by trading arms, that the rules

On earth still hold for those about to depart,
That it is best to be ready, for the ash
Of the body is worthless and goes only so far.

II

How can I sing when I haven't the heart, or the hope
That something of paradise persists in my song,
That a touch of those long afternoons of summer flowing

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With golden greens under the sky's unbroken blue
Will find a home in yet another imagined place?
Will someone be there to play the viola?

Someone for whom the sad tunes still matter?
And after I go, as I must, and come back through the hourglass,
Will I have proved that I live against time, that the silk of the songs

I sang is not lost? Or will I have proved that whatever I love
Is unbearable, that the views of Lethe will never
Improve, that whatever I sing is a blank?

III

What light is this that says the air is golden,
That even the green trees can be saved
For a moment and look bejewelled,

That my hand, as I lift it over the shade
Of my body, becomes a flame pointing the way
To a world from which no one returns, yet toward

Which everyone travels? The sheen of the possible
Is adjusting itself to a change of venue: the look
Of farewell, the sun dipping under the clouds,

Faltering at the serrated edge of the mountains,
Then going quickly. And the new place, the night,
Spacious, empty, a tomb of lights, turning away,

And going under, becoming what no one remembers.

—Mark Strand

• •

of feelings, and I was used to being treated by other people with protective affection, if only because I am small. This in part explained why the courtroom, and its formal process of accusation, its focus on me as a stipulated bad person, had been such a shock. It was as if a furious mob had come to smash with sticks the porcelain figure of my self. I had a brief intimation that the Australians, with their simple friendliness, could put me back together if I would let them, but I would rather lie in pieces for a while.

The moon was full and golden. "What a beautiful, beautiful night," said Nettie from Perth, the wife of George, coming out onto the beach. Who could disagree? Not even I. The ship on the moonlit water lapped at anchor, resting, awaiting them, looking luxurious and serene. J. came out and showed us the Southern Cross. At first I couldn't see it, all constellations look alike to me—I have never been able to see the bears or belts or any of it. But now, when J. turned my chin, I did see it, and it did look like a cross.

IN the night I had another dream, in which the lawyer had said, "Isn't it true that you have often left your children while you travel?" He had been looking not at me but at a laughing audience. He was speaking over a microphone. The audience wore fringed hats of plastic straw.

"Not willingly, no," I had said. "Not often."

"How many times did you go on trips last year and leave them at home?"

"Oh, six, I don't know."

"That's not often?"

"Just a day or two each time. A man takes a business trip, you don't call it 'leaving,' or 'often.'" But I was not allowed to speak or explain.

"We're looking at how often you are in fact away from your children."

Here I had awakened, realizing that it was all true, it wasn't just a dream, it was what had happened—not, of course, the audience in plastic hats. Even though in the end I had been vindicated in the matter of the children, I still felt sticky with the encumbrance of their father's hate. All I had wanted was to be free, and now I was so soiled with words spoken at me, about me, by strangers, by lawyers I had never seen before, who had never seen me. It didn't seem fair that you could not prevent being the object of other people's emotions, you were not safe anywhere from their hate—or from their love, for that matter. You were never safe from being invaded by their feelings when you wanted only to be rid of them, free, off, away.

IN the morning I had wanted to swim, to bathe in the sea, to wash all this stuff off, splash; my longing must have been clear, because Cawley, the other deckhand, laughed at me. "Not here you don't, love," he said. "There's sharks here as long as a boat."

The captain, Captain Clarke, made one of his few visits. He had kept aloof in the pilot cabin above, though he must have slipped down to the galley to eat, or maybe the crew took him his food up there. Now he invited his passengers two by two to the bridge. When people were tapped, they hauled themselves up the metal ladder, steadied by Cawley or Murray, then would come down looking gratified. Albert, who went up alone, suggested that he had helped avoid a navigational accident.

J. and I were invited on the morning of the fourth day, the day we were to arrive at the reef itself in the late afternoon. I went up despite myself. Captain Clarke was a thin, red-haired man sitting amid pipes and instruments. He let us take the wheel, and showed us the red line that marked our route through the labyrinth of islands on the chart. His manner was grave, polite, resigned. No doubt these visits were dictated by the cruise company.

"But there are thousands of islands between here and the Great Barrier Reef!" said J., studying the charts.

"Souvenir shops on every one," I couldn't help saying. J. fastened me with a steady look in which I read terminal exasperation.

"These islands are not all charted," said the Captain. "The ones that are

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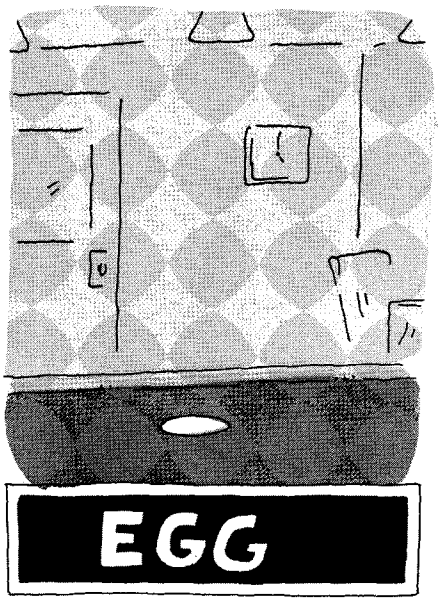
were almost all charted by Captain Cook himself, after he ran aground on one in 1770. He was a remarkable navigator. He even gave names to them all. But new ones are always being found. I've always hoped to find one myself."

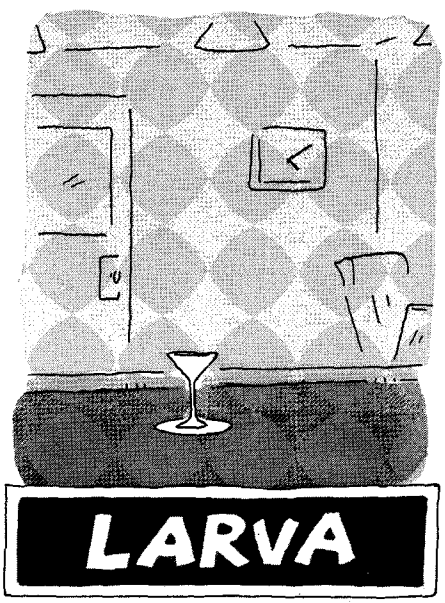
"What would you name it?" J. asked.

"I would give it my name, or, actually, since there is already a Clarke Island, I would name it for my wife, Laura—Laura Clarke Island—or else for Alison, my daughter."

"Do you keep your eyes open for one?"

"I mean to get one," he said.





WHEN we went down to the deck again, Maureen was gazing at the waves. "It's getting choppy," she observed, unnecessarily, for the boat had begun to rear up like a prancing horse.

"Right, we probably won't make it," Murray agreed.

"What do you mean?" I asked, alarmed by the tinge of satisfaction that underlay their sorry looks.

"To the reef. No point in going if the sea's up, like it's coming up—washed right up, no use going out there. If it's like this, we put in at Hook Island instead."

Astonished, I looked around to see if J., or anyone else, was listening. No, or not worried—would just as soon have Hook Island. They continued to knit and read along the deck, which now began to heave more forcefully, as if responding to the desire of the crew to return to port without seeing the great sight.

"How often does it happen that you don't go to the reef?" I asked Murray, heart thundering. The point of all this, and J.'s dream, was to go to the reef, and now they were casually dismissing the possibility.

"Oh, it happens more often than not. This time of year, you know. Chancy, the nautical business is."

"Come out all this way and not see it?" I insisted, voice rising.

"Well, you can't see it if the waves are covering it up, can you? You can bump your craft into it, but you can't see it. Can you?"

"I don't know," I cried. "I don't even know what it is." But the shape of things was awfully clear; given the slightest excuse, the merest breeze or ripple, the Dolphin would not take us to the Great Barrier Reef, and perhaps had never meant to. I thought in panic of not alerting J., but then I rushed to tell him. He put down his book, his expression aghast, and studied the waves.

The midday sky began to take on a blush of deeper blue, and now that our attention was called to it, the sea seemed to grow dark and rough before our eyes. Where moments before it had been smooth enough to row, we now began to pitch. The report of the prow smacking the waves made me think of cannons, of Trafalgar. In defiance of the rocking motion, the Australian passengers began to move around the cabin and along the deck, gripping the railings, looking trustfully at the sky and smiling. Their dentures were white as teacups.

"Christ," said Murray, "one of these bloody old fools will break a hip. Folks, why don't you sit down?" Obediently, like children, the Australians went inside the main cabin and sat in facing rows of chairs. Despite the abrupt change in the weather, the ship continued its course out to sea. J. and I anchored ourselves in the prow, leaning against the tool chest, resolutely watching the horizon, not the bounding deck beneath our feet—a recommended way to avoid seasickness. In twenty minutes the sea had changed altogether, from calm to a thing that threw the little ship in the air. We felt as if we were slithering along the back of a sea monster that was toiling beneath us.

Soon the dread spectre of seasickness was among us. The Captain, rusty-haired, pale-eyed, as if his eyes had been bleached with sea wind, climbed off the bridge and glanced inside the cabin at his passengers.

"Oh, please, they want to go, they'll be all right," I called to him, but the words were swept off by the wind. The others were so occupied with the likelihood of nausea that they hadn't grasped that the ship might turn back, and they seemed rather to be enjoying the drama of getting seasick. Every few minutes someone would get up, totter out to the rail, retch over it, and return to the laughter and commiseration of the others. The friendly thing was to be sick, so I was contrarily determined not to be, and J. was strong by nature. One of the Australians, Albert, gave us a matey grin as he lurched over our feet toward a bucket. I looked disgustedly away, but J. wondered aloud if he should be helping these old folks.

"Of course, they'll use this as an excuse for not going," I was saying bitterly. These barfing Australian senior citizens would keep us from getting to the Great Barrier Reef. My unruly emotions, which had been milder today, now plumped around in my bosom like the boat smacking on the waves. J. watched the Australians screaming with laughter and telling each other, "That's right, barf in the bin."

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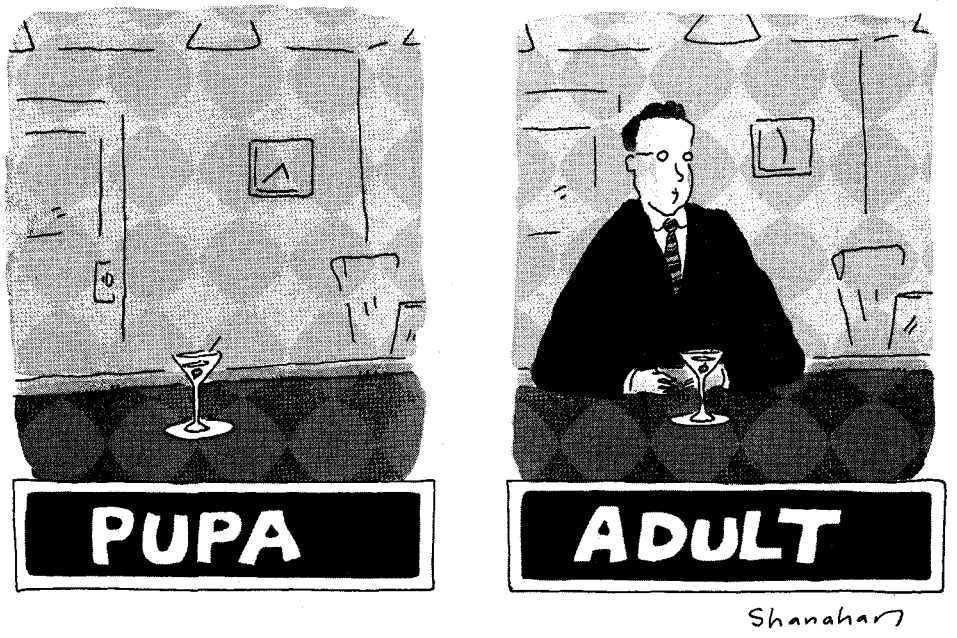

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"This is a rough one," Albert said, and pitched sharply against the cabin, so that J. leaped up to catch him. Murray, tightening ropes, called for him to go back inside.

"Tossed a cookie meself." He grinned at J. and me.

"We don't think it's so rough," I said.

"I've seen plenty rougher," Murray agreed. "Bloody hangover is my problem."

When the Captain leaned out to look down at the deck below him, I cried, "Oh, we just have to go to the reef, we have to! Oh, please!"

"What's the likelihood this sea will die down?" J. shouted to the Captain. The Captain shrugged. I felt angry at J. for the first time, as if he were a magnet. It was unfair, I knew, to say it was J.'s fault—the storm, the tossing sea, the Dolphin, and, of course, the rest. J. who had signed us up for this terrible voyage, during which we would be lost at sea, before reaching the Great Barrier Reef, whatever it was, and who had caused the sea to come up like this. All J.'s fault. If I ever saw the children again it would be a miracle—or else they would be saying in after years, Our mother perished on the high seas somewhere off Australia. What would they remember of me? The sight of the boiling waves, now spilling over the bow, now below us, made me think of throwing myself in—just an unbidden impulse trailing into my mind, the way I half thought, always, of throwing my keys or my sunglasses off bridges. Of course I wouldn't do it.

The ship pitched, thrust, dove through the waters. Yet we had not turned back. "Whoooeee," the Aussies were screaming inside the lounge. Life was like this, getting tossed around, and then, right before the real goal is reached, something, someone, impedes you.

"J., don't let them turn back," I said again, for the tenth time, putting all the imperative passion I could into my voice. Without hearing me, J. was already climbing the ladder to the bridge. I looked at my fingers whitely gripping the rope handle on the end of the tool chest. A bait locker slid across the deck, back, across, back, and once, upon the impact of a giant wave, a dead fish stowed in it sloshed out onto the deck. Then, in the wind, I heard Murray's thin voice call out, "It's all right, love, we're going to the reef! The captain says we're going to the reef!"

As abruptly as the storm had started, it subsided meekly, the sky once more changed color, now to metallic gray, lighter at the horizon, as if it were dawn. Ahead of us an indistinguishable shape lay in the water like the back of a submerged crocodile, a vast bulk under the surface. The Captain had stopped the engines, and we drifted in the water. "The reef, the reef!" cried the Australians, coming out on deck. I shouted, too. The crew began to busy themselves with readying the small boats, and the other passengers came boisterously out of the cabin, as if nothing had been wrong. "Ow," they said, "that was a bit of a toss."

"You'll have two hours on the reef, not more," the Captain told us before we climbed again into the rowboats. "Because of the tide. If you get left there at high tide, if we can't find you, well, we don't come back. Because you wouldn't be there." The Australians laughed at this merry joke.

J. handed me out of the boat and onto the reef. My first step on it shocked me. For I had had the idea of coral, hard and red, a great lump of coral sticking out of the ocean, a jagged thing that would scratch you if you fell on it, that you could carve into formations dictated by your own mind. We had heard it was endangered, and I had imagined its destruction by divers with chisels, carrying off lumps at a time.

Instead it was like a sponge. It sank underfoot, it sighed and sucked. Looking down, I could see that it was entirely alive, made of eyeless formations of cabbagey creatures sucking and opening and closing, yearning toward tiny ponds of water lying on the pitted surface, pink, green, gray, viscous, silent. I moved, I put my foot here, then hurriedly there, stumbled, and gashed my palm against something rough.

"Where should you step? I don't want to step on the things," I gasped.

"You have to. Just step as lightly as you can," J. said.

"It's alive, it's all alive!"

"Of course. It's coral, it's alive, of course," J. said. He had told me there were three hundred and fifty species of living coral here, along with the calcareous remains of tiny polyzoan and hydrozoan creatures that helped to form a home for others. Anemones, worms, gastropods, lobsters, crayfish, prawns, crown of thorns, other starfish, hydrocorals, the red Lithothamnion algae, the green Halimeda.

"Go on, J., leave me," I said, seeing that he wanted to be alone to have his own thoughts about all this marine life, whatever it meant to him. It meant something. His expression was one of rapture. He smiled at me and wandered off.

I had my Minox, but I found the

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things beneath my feet too fascinating to photograph. Through the viewer of my camera they seemed pale and far away. At my feet, in astonishing abundance, they went on with their strange life. I hated to tread on them, so stood like a stork and aimed the camera at the other passengers.

These were proceeding cautiously, according to their fashion, over the delicate surface—Mark in his yachting cap, with his camera, alone; the Kiwis in red tropical shirts more brilliant than the most bright-hued creatures underfoot; even the crew, with insouciant expressions, protectively there to save their passengers from falls or from strange sea poisons that darted into the inky ponds from the wounded life beneath our feet. For the first time, I felt, seeing each behaving characteristically, that I knew them all, and even that I liked them, or at least that I liked it that I understood what they would wear and do. Travellers like myself.

I watched J. kneeling in the water to peer into the centers of the mysterious forms. Almost as wonderful as this various life was J.'s delight. He was as dazzled as if we had walked on stars, and, indeed, the sun shining on the tentacles, wet petals, filling the spongy holes, made things sparkle like a strange underfoot galaxy. He appeared as a long, sandy-haired, handsome stranger, separate, unknowable. I, losing myself once more in the patterns and colors, thought of nothing, was myself as formless and uncaring as the coral, all my unruly, bad-natured passions leaching harmlessly into the sea, leaving a warm sensation of blankness and ease. I thought of the Hindu doctrine of *ahimsa*, of not harming living things, and I was not harming them, I saw—neither by stepping on them nor by leaving my anger and fears and the encumbrances of real life with them. For me, the equivalent of J.'s happiness was this sense of being cured of a poisoned spirit.

AT sunset we headed landward into the sun, a strange direction to a Californian, for whom all sunsets are out at sea. We would arrive at Mackay at midnight—it also seemed strange that a voyage that had taken four days out would take only six hours back, something to do with the curve of the continental shelf. A spirit of triumph imbued our little party—we had lived through storms and reached a destination. People sat in the lounge labelling their film.

Maureen came along and reminded us that as this was our last night on board, there would be a fancy-dress party. When we had read this in the brochure, I had laughed. It had seemed absurd that such a little ship would give itself great liner airs. J. and I had not brought costumes. In our cabin, I asked him what he meant to wear. Since my attitude had been so resolutely one of noncompliance, he seemed surprised that I was going to participate in the dressing up. "I know it's stupid, but how can we not?" I said. "It would be so churlish, with only sixteen of us aboard."

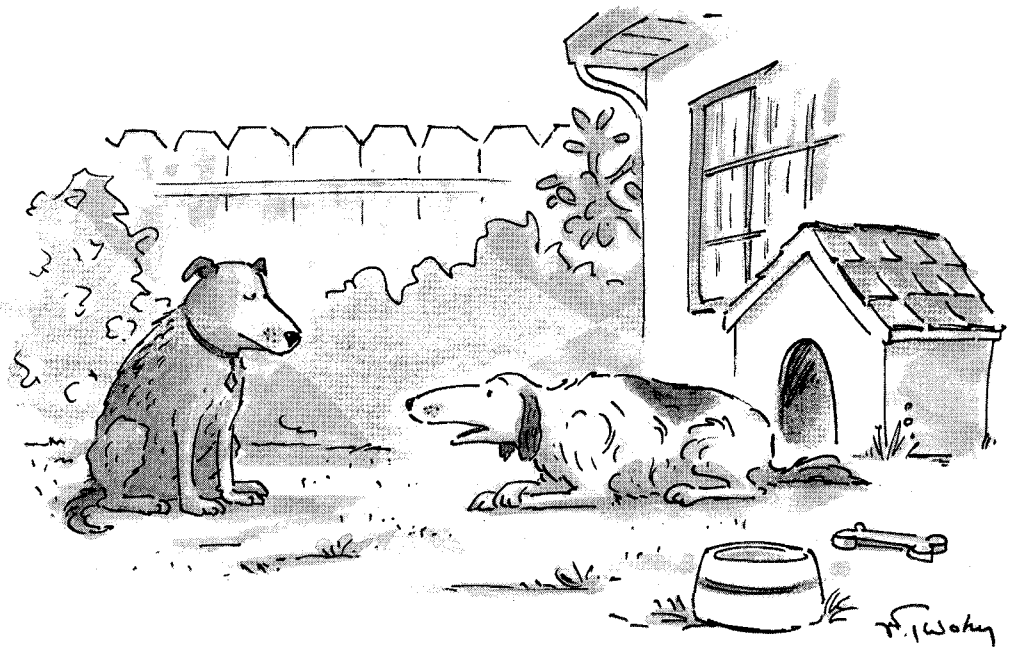
J. wore his ski pants, which were blue and tight, with a towel cape, and called himself Batman. I wore his ski parka, a huge, orange, down-filled garment. The others were elaborately got up, must have brought their masks and spangles with them. Rita wore a black leotard and had painted cat whiskers on her face, and Dave had a Neptune beard. Nettie wore a golden crown, and Don a harlequin suit, half purple, half green. I drew to one side and sat on the table with my feet drawn up inside J.'s parka, chin on my knees, watching the capers that now began. "Me? I am a pumpkin," I explained, when they noticed the green ribbon in my hair, my stem. It wasn't much of a costume, but it was all I could think of, and they laughed forgivingly and said that it looked cute.

J. won a prize, a bottle of beer, for the best paper cutout of a cow. I was surprised, watching him making meticulous little snips with the scissors, to see how a cow shape emerged under his hands, with a beautiful, delicate udder and teats, and knobs of horn. I had not thought that J. would notice a cow.

"I have an announcement," Mark said, in a strangely loud and shaky voice, one hand held up, his other hand nervously twisting his knotted cravat. The theme of his costume was not obvious.

"Excuse me, an announcement." The others smiled and shushed. "I've had word from my friend—a few months ago I had the honor to assist a friend with his astronomical observations, and I've just had word that he—we—that the comet we discovered has been accepted by the international commission. It will bear his name, and, as I had the honor to assist, I'll be mentioned, too. Only a little comet, of course, barely a flash in the sky. There are millions of them, of course. There are millions of them, but—"

A cheer, toasts. Mark bought drinks for everybody. The crew bought drinks for the guests, dishing up from behind the little bar with the slick expertise of landside bartenders. They seemed respectful at Mark's news. I raised my glass with the rest and felt



"I've got the bowl, the bone, the big yard. I know I should be happy."

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ashamed at the way I had despised Mark's life—indeed, a nice life, spent exploring the heavens with a friend. How had I thought him friendless, this nice-looking young man?

"Split, Yugoslavia, is the most beautiful place on earth," George was telling me. "Like a travel poster. I've been almost everywhere by now, except China, but there, at Split, my heart stopped." My attention was reclaimed from my own repentant thoughts; for a second I had been thinking that he was describing a medical calamity, and I had been about to say "How terrible!"

But no, he was describing a moment, an epiphany, the experience of beauty. He had the long, bald head of a statesman, but he was a farmer, now retired, from Perth. I was ashamed that it had taken me so long to see that the difference between Americans and Australians was that Americans were tired and bored, while for Australians, stuck off at the edge of the world, all was new, and they had the energy and spirit to go off looking for abstractions like beauty, and comets.

"Let me get you another one of those," George said, taking my wineglass, for a pumpkin cannot move.

"How long have you been married?" asked Nettie, smiling at me. I considered, not knowing whether I wanted to shock them by admitting that we were not married at all. "Two years," I said.

"Really?" Nettie laughed. "We all thought you was newlyweds." Her smile was sly.

I felt myself flush inside the hot parka. The others had thought all my withdrawn unfriendliness was newlywed shyness and the preoccupations of love. They were giving me another chance.

"It seems like it." I laughed. I would never marry J., I thought. He was too good-natured to be saddled with a cross person like me. And yet now I wasn't cross, was at ease and warm with affection for the whole company. Don and Donna were buying champagne all around, and the crew, now that they were about to be rid of this lot of passengers, seemed sentimental and sorry, as if we had been the nicest, most amusing passengers ever. The prize for the best costume was to be awarded by vote. People wrote on bits of paper and passed them to Maureen, who sat on the bar and sorted them. There was even a little mood of tension, people wanting to win.

"And the prize for the best costume"—she paused portentously—"goes to the pumpkin!" My shipmates beamed and applauded. In the hot parka I felt myself grow even warmer with shame and affection. People of good will and good sense, and I had allowed a snobbish mood of acedia to blind me to it. Their white, untroubled smiles.

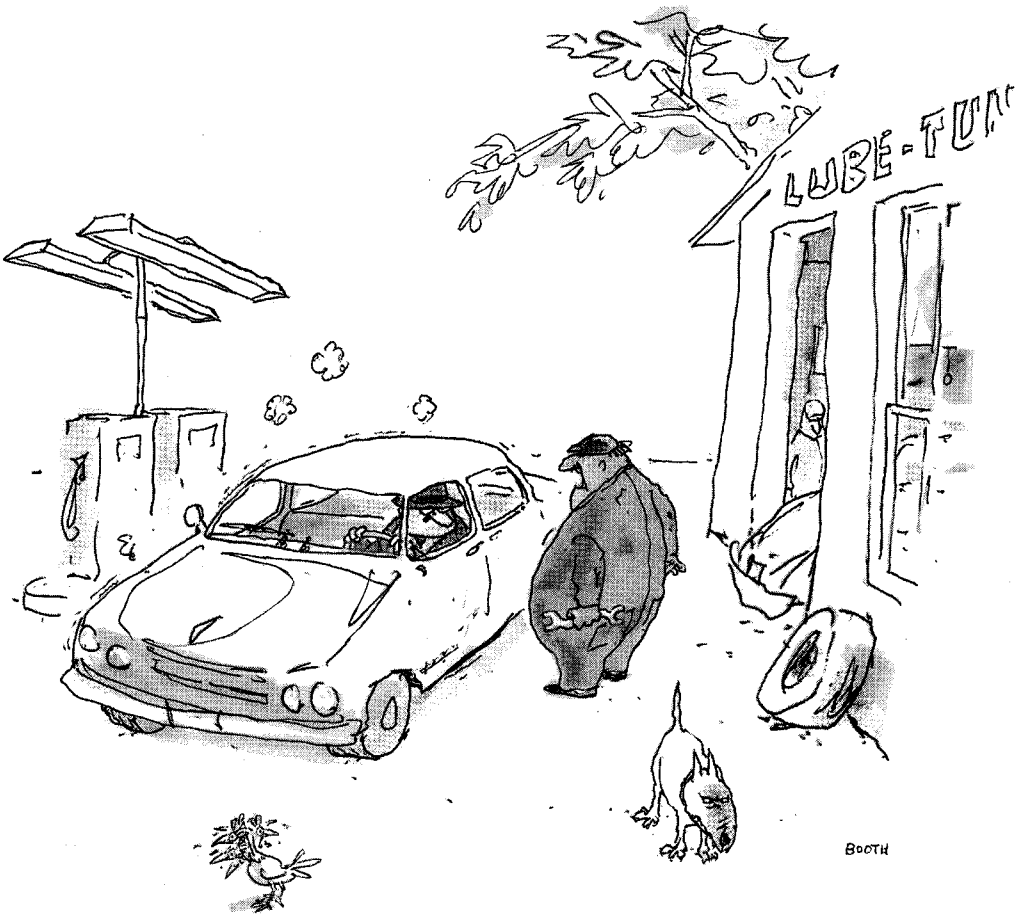
In a paper parcel was a key ring with a plastic-covered picture of the Dolphin, and the words "Great Barrier Reef" around the edge of it. I was seized by a love for it, would always carry it, I decided, if only as a reminder of various moral lessons I thought myself to have learned, and as a reminder of certain bad things about my own character.

"Thank you very much," I said. "I'll always keep it. And I'll always remember the Dolphin and all of you"—for I thought, of course, that I would. J. was looking at me with a considering air, as if to inspect my sincerity. But I was sincere.

"I know I've been a pig," I apologized to him later, as we gathered our things in the stateroom. "These people are really very sweet."

"I wonder if you'd feel like that if you hadn't gotten the prize," he said, peevishly. I was surprised at his tone. Of course, it wasn't the prize—only a little key chain, after all—that had cured me, but the process of the voyage, and the mysterious power of distant places to dissolve the problems the traveller has brought along. Looking at J., I could see that, for his part, he was happy but let down, as if the excitement and happiness of seeing the reef at last, and no doubt the nuisance of my complaining, had worn him out for the moment, and serious thoughts of his coming confrontations with malaria and leprosy and pain and sadness were returning, and what he needed was a good night's sleep.

—Diane Johnson



"My name is Leonard, and I'll be your auto mechanic for today."

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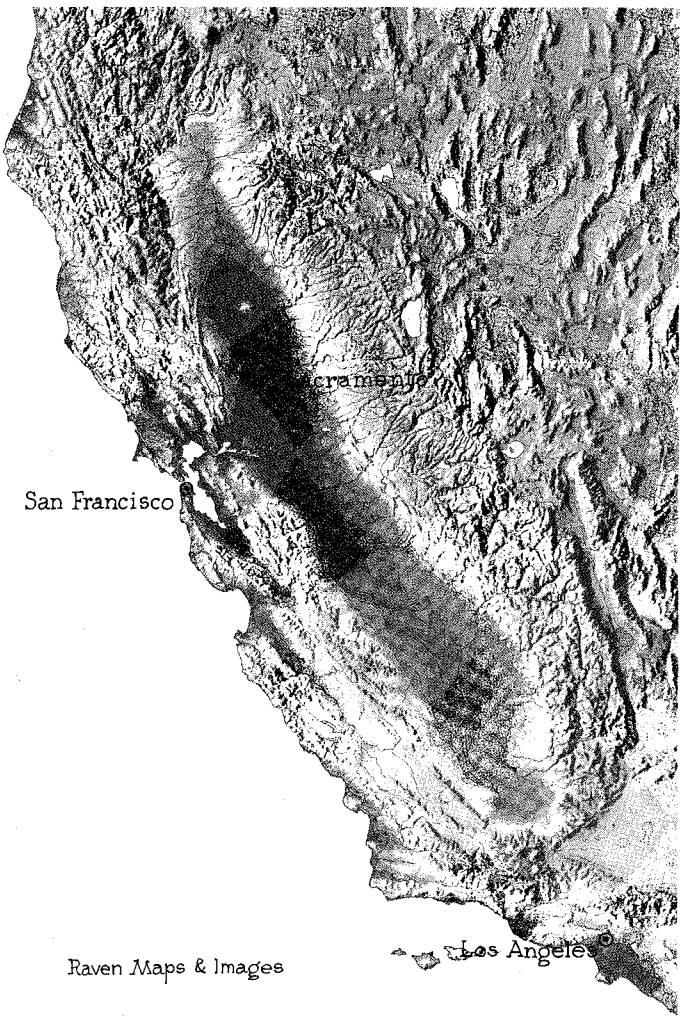
ANNALS OF THE FORMER WORLD

ASSEMBLING CALIFORNIA—I

YOU go down through the Ocean View district of San Francisco to the first freeway exit after Daly City, where you describe, in effect, a hairpin turn to head north past a McDonald's to a dead end in a local dump. It is called the Daly City Scavenger Company. You leave your car and walk north on a high contour some hundreds of yards through deep grasses until a path to your left takes you down a steep slope a quarter of a mile to the ocean. You double back along the water, south to Mussel Rock.



Mussel Rock is a horse. As any geologist will tell you, a horse is a displaced rock mass that has been caught between the walls of a fault. This one appeared to have got away. It seemed to have strained successfully to jump out of the continent. Or so I thought the first time I was there. It loomed in fog. Green seas slammed against it and turned white. It was not a small rock. It was like a three-story building, standing in the Pacific, with brown pelicans on the roof. You could walk out on a ledge and look up through the fog at the pelicans. When you looked around and faced inland, you saw that you were at the base of a fifty-foot cliff, its lithology shattered beyond identification. A huge crack split the cliff from top to bottom and ran on out through the ledge and under the waves. After a five-hundred-mile northwesterly drift through southern and central California, this was where the San Andreas Fault intersected the sea.

I went to Mussel Rock that foggy afternoon in 1978 with the geologist Kenneth Deffeyes. I have returned a number of times since, alone or in the company of others. With regard to the lithosphere, it's a good place to sit and watch the plates move. It is a moment in geography that does your thinking for you. The San Andreas Fault, of course, is not a single strand. It is something like a wire rope, as much as half a mile wide, each strand the signature of one or many earthquakes. Mussel Rock is near the outboard edge of the zone. You cannot really say that on one side of the big crack is the North American Plate and on the other side is the Pacific Plate, but it's tempting to do so. Almost automatically, you stand with one foot on each side and imagine your stride lengthening—your right foot, say, riding backward toward Mexico, your left foot in motion toward Alaska. There's some truth in such a picture, but the actual plate boundary is not so sharply defined. Not only is the San Andreas of varying width in its complexity of strands, it is merely the senior fault in a large family of more or less parallel faults in an over-all swath at least fifty miles wide. Some of the faults are to the west and under the ocean; more are inland. Whether the plate boundary is five miles wide or fifty miles wide or extends all the way to central Utah is a matter that geologists currently debate. Nonetheless, there is granite under the sea off Mussel Rock that is evidently from the southern Sierra Nevada, has travelled three hundred miles along the San Andreas system, and continues to move northwest. As evidence of the motion of the plates, that granite will do.

For an extremely large percentage of the history of the world, there was no California. That is, according to present theory. I don't mean to suggest that California was underwater and has since come up. I mean to say that of the varied terranes and physiographic provinces that we now call California nothing whatever was there. The continent ended far to the east, the continental shelf as well. Where California has come to be, there was only blue sea reaching down some miles to ocean-crustal rock, which was moving, as it does, into subduction zones to be consumed. Ocean floors with an aggregate area many times the size of the present Pacific were made at spreading centers, moved around the curve of the earth, and melted in trenches before there ever was so much as a kilogram of California. Then, a piece at a time—according to present theory—parts began to assemble. An island arc here, a piece of a continent there—a Japan at a time, a New Zealand, a Madagascar—came crunching in upon the continent and have thus far adhered. Baja is about to detach. A great deal more may go with it. Some parts of California arrived

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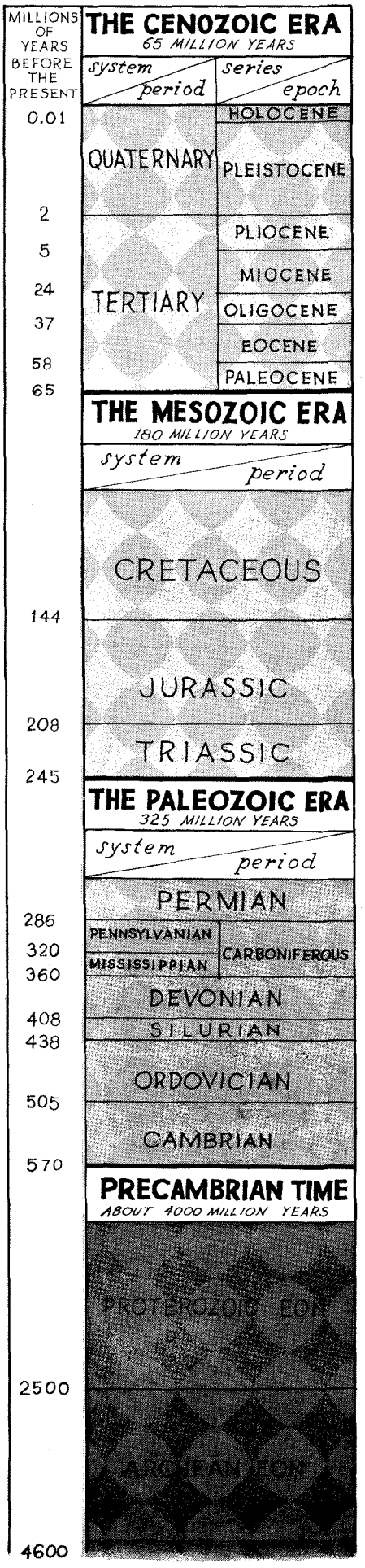
head on, and others came sliding in on transform faults, in the manner of that Sierra granite west of the San Andreas. In 1906, the jump of the great earthquake—the throw, the offset, the maximum amount of local displacement as one plate moved with respect to the other—was something like twenty feet. The dynamics that have pieced together the whole of California have consisted of tens of thousands of earthquakes as great as that—tens of thousands of examples of what people like to singularize as "the big one"—and many millions of earthquakes of lesser magnitude. In 1914, Andrew Lawson, writing the San Francisco Folio of the Geologic Atlas of the United States, wistfully said, "Most of the faults are the expression of energies that have been long spent and are not in any sense a menace. It is, moreover, barely possible that stresses in the San Andreas fault zone have been completely and permanently relieved by the fault movement of 1906." Andrew Lawson—who named the San Andreas Fault—was a structural geologist of the first order, whose theoretical conclusions were as revered in his time as others' are at present. For the next six decades in California, a growing population tended to imagine that the stresses were indeed gone—that the greatest of historic earthquakes (in this part of the fault) had relieved the pressure and settled the risk forever. In the nineteen-sixties, though, when the work of several scientists from various parts of the world coalesced to form the theory of plate tectonics, it became apparent—at least, to geologists—that those twenty feet of 1906 were a minuscule part of a shifting global geometry. The twenty-odd lithospheric plates of which the rind of the earth consists are nearly all in continual motion; in these plate movements, earthquakes are the incremental steps. Fifty thousand major earthquakes will move something about a hundred miles. After there was nothing, earthquakes brought things from far parts of the world to fashion California.

Deffeyes and I had been working in Utah and Nevada, in the physiographic province of the Basin and Range. Now he was about to go east and home, and we wandered around San Francisco while waiting for his plane. Downtown, we walked by the Transamerica building, with its wide base, its high sides narrowing to a point, and other buildings immensely tall and straight. Deffeyes said, "There are two earthquake-resistant structures—the pyramids and the redwoods. These guys are working both sides of the street." The skyscrapers were new, in 1978. In an earthquake, buildings of different height would have different sway periods, he noted. They would "creak and groan, skin to skin." The expansion joints in freeways attracted his eye. He said they might open up in an earthquake, causing roadways to fall. He called the freeways "disposable—Kleenexes good for one blow." He made these remarks in the shadowy space of Second Street and Stillman, under the elevated terminus of Interstate 80, the beginnings of the San Francisco Skyway, the two-level structure of the Embarcadero Freeway, and so many additional looping ramps and rights-of-way that Deffeyes referred to it all as the Spaghetti Bowl. He said it was resting on a bog that had once surrounded a tidal creek. The multiple roadways were held in the air by large steel Ts. Deffeyes said, "It's the engineer in a game against nature. In a great earthquake, the ground will turn to gray jello. Those Ts may uproot like tomato stakes. And that will seal everyone in town. Under the landfill, the preëxisting mud in the old tidal channel will liquefy. You could wiggle your feet a bit and go up to your knees." In 1906, the shaking over the old tidal channel that is now under the freeways was second in intensity only to the San Andreas fault zone itself, seven miles away. "Los Angeles, someday, will be sealed in worse than this," he continued. "In the critical hours after a great earthquake, they will be cut off from help, food, water. Take one piece out of each freeway and they're through."

In a rented pickup, we had entered California the day before, climbing the staircase of fault blocks west of Reno that had led the Donner Party to the crest of mountains named for snow. This was among the first of a series of journeys on and near Interstate 80 that I would be making in the company of geologists, for the purpose of describing not only the rock exposed in roadcuts—and the regional geologies into which the roadcuts would serve as windows—but also the geologists themselves. The result was meant to be a



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sort of cross-section of the United States at about the fortieth parallel, and a picture of the science. The writing would develop as four compositions, of which this is the fourth. The element controlling them—the subject that has shaped the over-all structure—has been plate tectonics. The scientific papers that effected the plate-tectonics revolution were published from 1959 to 1968. Much of what was written there was at first widely scorned. As I started out on my transcontinental journeys, in 1978, I wanted to see how the science was settling down with its new theory, and, as a continuing result of its revelations, what revisions would occur in the consensual biography of the earth. Plenty of other matters would be discussed, but that one was paramount. The developed structure has not been linear—not a straightforward trip from New York to San Francisco on the interstate. It began in New Jersey and then leaped to Nevada, because the tectonics in New Jersey two hundred million years ago are being recapitulated by the tectonics in Nevada today. While the progress was not linear in a geographic sense, thematically it was aimed at California. In California was the prow of the North American Plate—in these latitudes, the sliding boundary. California was also among the freshest acquisitions of the continent. So radical and contemporary were the regional tectonics that the highest and the lowest points in the contiguous United States were within eighty miles of each other in California. As nowhere else along the fortieth parallel in North America, this was where the new theory was announcing its agenda.

Over the years, I would crisscross the country many times, revisiting people and places, yet the first morning with Deffeyes among the rocks of California retains a certain burnish, because it exemplified not only how abrupt the transition can be as you move from one physiographic province to another but also the jurisdictional differences in the world of the geologist. As we crossed the state line under a clear sky and ascended toward Truckee, we passed big masses of competent, blocky, beautiful rocks bright in their quartzes and feldspars and peppered with shining black mica. The ebullient Deffeyes said, "Come into the Sierra and commune with the granite."

A bend or two later, his mood extending even to the diamond-shaped warnings at the side of the road, he said, "Falling-rock signs are always good news to us."

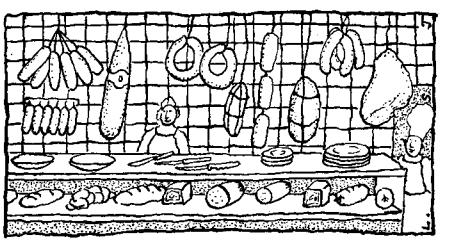
Then a big pink-and-buff roadcut confused him. He said he thought it consisted of "young volcanics," but preferred to let it remain "mysterious for the moment." The moment stretched. Deffeyes is as eclectic as a geologist can become, a generalist of remarkable range, but his particular expertise—he wrote his dissertation in Nevada and has done much work there since—was fading in the distance behind him. Up the road was a metasediment in dark and narrow blocks going every which way, like jackstraws. Deffeyes got out of the pickup and put his nose on the outcrop, but he had an easier time identifying a bald eagle that watched him from an overhanging pine.

"You need a new geologist," he said to me.

We took a rock sample, washed our hands in melting snow, and ate a couple of sandwiches as we watched wet traffic with bright headlights come down from Donner Summit. Looking back to the cloudless Basin and Range and seeing what lay ahead for us, Deffeyes said, "Out of the rain shadow, into the rain."

After we got up into the high country ourselves, some additional metasediment left him colder than the rain. "The time has come to turn you over to Eldridge Moores," he said.

A few miles farther on, we came to a big, gravelly roadcut that looked like an ashfall, a mudflow, glacial till, and fresh oatmeal, imperfectly blended. "I don't know what this glop is," he said, in final capitulation. "You need a new geologist. You need a Californian."



Moores could be found on a one-acre farm in the Great Central Valley—in a tract surrounded on three sides by the vegetable-crop field labs of the University of California, Davis. Twenty years earlier, Davis had been an agricultural college, but it had since expanded in numerous directions to take its place beside Berkeley, attracting to the Geology Department, for example, such youthful figures of future reputation as the mantle petrologist Ian MacGregor and the paleo-

THE REAPPEARED

Long after we stopped remembering, word of him
drifts back from the coast
to let us know he's still hanging on,

in someone else's place and time,
living in a shed in their ivy-choked gardens—
his head shaved, his altered face,

the skin in patches under his eyes.
Supposedly, though, he's still tender and wise;
and having found out it's the same there as here—

the heat breaking out of its sack,
the stars wobbling on their black thrones—
he's made up his mind to never come back.

It's all the same: and on its verge
the borderless ocean scrawls and scrawls
reiterations which repeat

that it's all the same,
and he can fall into it and never change—
resurface, and simply swim away.

—Vijay Seshadri

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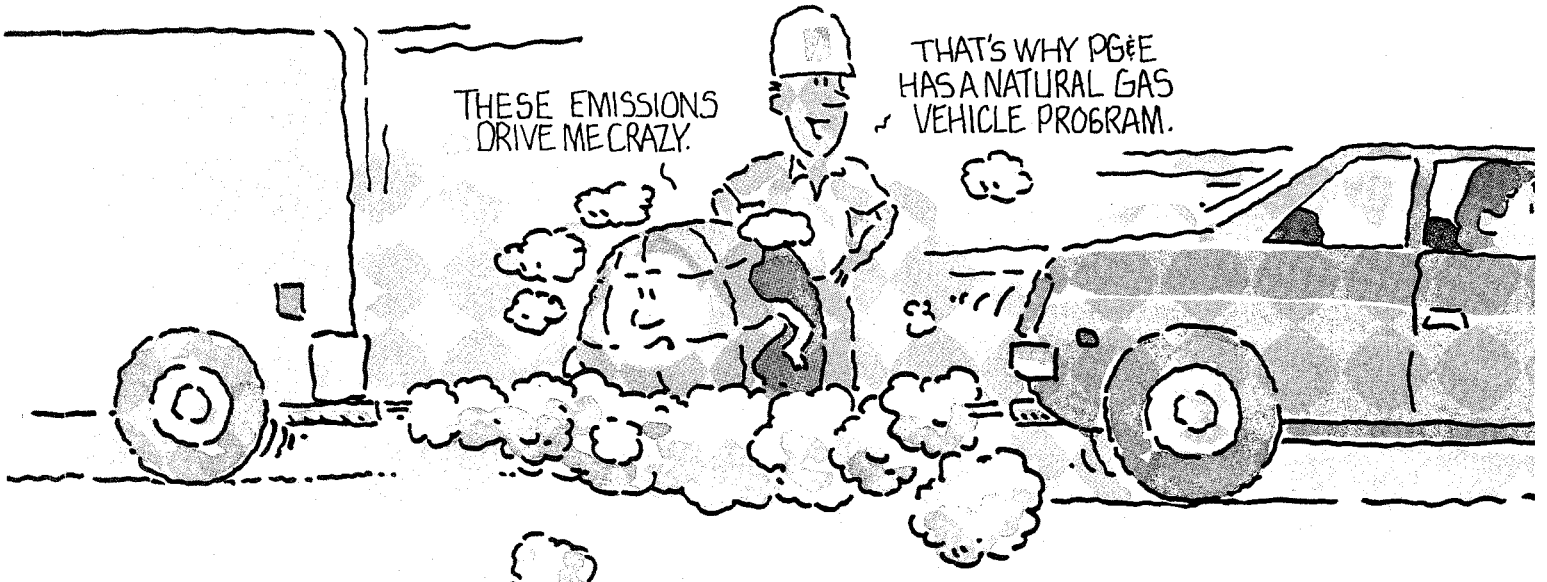

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SPIELMAN! OO-LA-LA! FANCY HANDWRITING! IS THAT PERFUME I SMELL?
HALVERSON! I GUESS SHE STILL LOVES YOU, HAL!
OSGOOD! EXPECTING ANYTHING FROM THE I.R.S., OZZIE?
MAIL CALL AT THOMPSON, HALVERSON, SPIELMAN & OSGOOD

• •

biologist Jere Lipps, not to mention the tectonicist Eldridge Moores.

At one time and another in what now approaches fifteen years, Moores and I would not so much traverse California as go into it in both directions from the middle. We would hammer the outcrops of Interstate 80 from Nevada to San Francisco, reaching out to related rock even farther than Timbuctoo. Timbuctoo is in Yuba County. The better to understand California, I would follow him to analogous geological field areas in Macedonia and Cyprus—journeys much enhanced by his knowledge of modern Greek. He has read widely in Greek history as well as geologic history, and standing on the steps of the Parthenon he sounds like any other tour guide—recounting wars, explosions, orations, and stolen marbles—until he tells you where the hill itself arrived from, and when, and why the Greeks sited their temple on soluble rock that they knew to be riddled with caverns. Moores has been a counsellor through all my projects in geology, across which time our beards have turned gray. He and his wife, Judy, still live in their turn-of-the-century farmhouse, with its high ceilings, its old two-light windows, its pools of sun on cedar floors. Their children—who were five, eight, and eleven when I met them—are grown and gone. On each of two porches lie big chunks of serpentine—smooth as talc, mottled black and green. When you see rocks like that on a porch, a geologist is inside.

In the living room is a framed montage of nine covers from *Geology*, a magazine introduced in the nineteen-seventies by the Geological Society of America and raised during the editorship of Eldridge Moores (1981-1988) to a level of world importance in the science. Moores is the sort of person who runs up flights of stairs circling elevator shafts, because elevators are so slow. He edited *Geology* while teaching full time and advancing his own widespread research. The montage was a gift to him from people at the G.S.A. It includes fumaroles in Iceland, dunes in southern Colorado, orange-hot lava on Kilauea, and a painting of a Triceratops being eaten alive by a Tyrannosaurus rex. In the heavens close above the struggling creatures is the Apollo Object—an asteroid, roughly six miles in diameter—that is believed to have collided with the earth and caused the extinction of the dinosaurs. In the editor's notes on the contents page, Moores referred to the painting as "the Last Supper." There were outraged complaints from geologists.

The centerpiece of the montage is a 1988 cover showing Moores on a coastal outcrop playing a cello. Moores grew up in Arizona's central highlands, in a community so remote and sparse that it was called a camp. A very great distance from pavement, it was far up the switchbacks of a mountain ridge and among the open mouths of small, hard-rock mines. At the age of thirteen, he learned to play the cello, and he practiced long in the afternoons. The miners, his father included, could not understand why he would want to do that. Moores has played with symphony orchestras in Davis and Sacramento. The coastal outcrop on the cover of *Geology* is the brecciated limestone of Petra tou Romiou, Cyprus. Moores in the field has long since overcome the most obvious drawback of a cello. He travels with an instrument handcrafted in a workshop in Maryland. Essentially, it is just like any other cello but it has no belly. Neck, pegbox, fingerboard, bridge—everything from scroll to spike fits into a slim rectangular case wired to serve as an electronic belly. This is a Sherpa's cello, a Chomolungma cello, a base-camp viol. In Moores' living room is a grand piano. Still on a shelf behind it are the sheet-music boxes of his children, labelled "Brian Clarinet," "Brian Bassoon," "Kathryn Cello," "Geneva Piano," and "Geneva Violin," and three additional boxes labelled "Eldridge Cello," "Eldridge Cello and Piano," "Eldridge Cello Concertos and Trios."

Judy grew up in farming country in Orange County, New York. On her California acre of the Great Valley she grows vegetables twelve months a year, and has also raised bush strawberries, grapes, blackberries, goats, pigs, chickens, pears, nectarines, plums, cherries,

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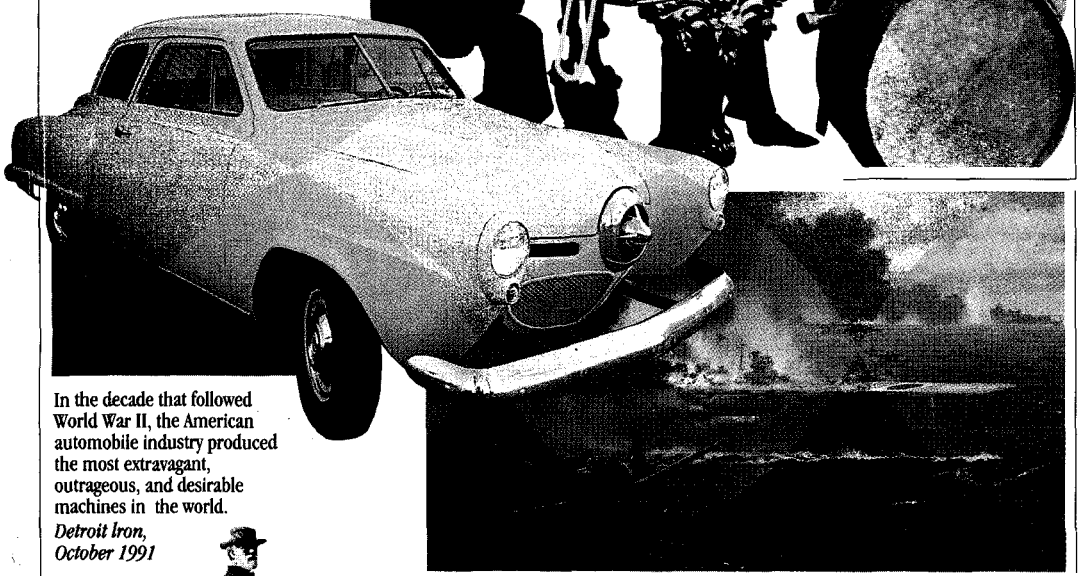

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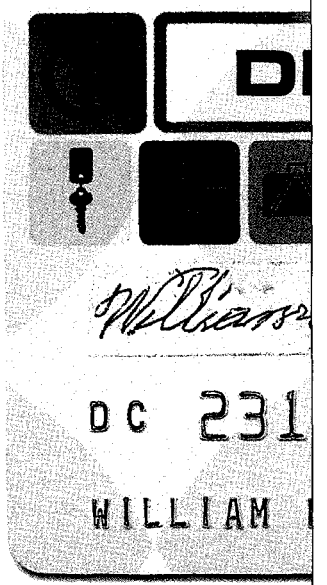
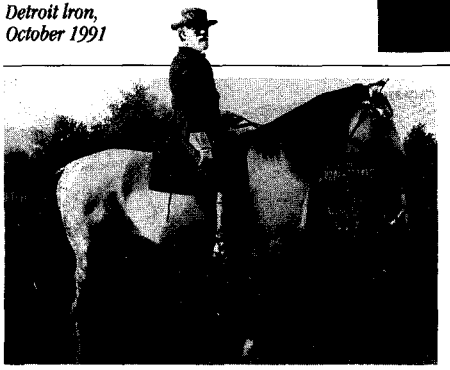


After an elegant dinner in a posh restaurant, Frank X. McNamara discovered he was out of cash. It gave him the idea for Diners Club, America's first credit card.
Credit Card America, November 1991



Alexander had a horse named Bucephalus. Napoleon had Marengo. Robert E. Lee had Traveller, a strikingly handsome and elegant animal. In contrast, Ulysses S. Grant's Cincinnati was a slightly rumpled bay.
Getting Right With Robert E. Lee, May/June 1991

Commander Joe Rochefort, who disobeyed the intelligence bureaucracy and gave Admiral Nimitz raw intelligence data, changed the course of World War II.
The Biggest Theater, December 1991

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peaches, apricots, asparagus, ziziphus, figs, apples, persimmons, and pineapple guavas—but not so prolifically in recent years, because she has been working toward a Ph.D. in human development, and teaching in the Early Childhood Laboratory at U.C. Davis. She has worked in regional science centers since she was a teen-ager, and, with others, she founded one in Davis. School buses bring children there from sixty miles around to get their hands on spotting scopes, microscopes, oscilloscopes, and living snakes, on u-build-it skeletons, on take-apart anatomies and disassembled brains. Judy, trim and teacherly, puts her hands palms down on a table to show the interaction of lithospheric plates. Lithosphere is crustal rock and mantle rock down to a zone in the mantle that is lubricious enough to allow the plates to move. Thumbs tucked, fingers flat, the hands side by side, she presses them hard together until they buckle upward. The hands are two continents, or other landmasses, converging, colliding—making mountains. The Himalaya was made that way. Placing the hands flat again, she slowly moves them apart. These are two plates separating, one on either side of a spreading center. The Atlantic Ocean was made that way. She begins to slide one hand under the other. This is subduction. Ocean floors are consumed that way. Thumbs tucked, fingers flat, palms again side by side, she slides one hand forward, one back, the index fingers rubbing. This is the motion of a transform fault, a strike-slip fault—the San Andreas Fault. Parts of California have slid into present place that way. Convergent margins, divergent margins, transform faults: she has outlined the boundaries of the earth's plates. There is enough complexity in tectonics to lithify the nimblest mind, but the basic model is that simple. Take your hands with you—she smiles—and you are ready for the mountains.

When I first went into the Sierra with Judy's husband, in 1978, he had an oyster-gray Volkswagen bus with a sticker on its bumper that said "Stop Continental Drift." I guess he thought that was funny. There were not a few geologists then who really would have stopped it in its tracks if they could have figured out a mechanism for doing so, but since no one knew then (or knows now) what drives the plates no one knew how to stop them. Plate tectonics had arrived in geology just about when Moores did, and—in his metaphor—he hit the beach in the second wave. He has called it "the realization wave": when geologists began to see the full dimensions and implications of the new theory, and the research possibilities it afforded—a scientific revolution literally on a global scale. As long-established geologic concepts disintegrated under the advance of the new paradigm, people coming into geology in the nineteen-sixties realized what was being handed to them, and would carry its principles into every corner of the science, historically revising every corner of the world.

Physiographic California, for much of its length, is divided into three parts. Where Interstate 80 crosses them, from Reno to San Francisco, they make a profile that is acutely defined: the Sierra Nevada, highest mountain range in the Lower Forty-eight; the Great Central Valley, essentially at sea level and very much flatter than Iowa or Kansas; and the Coast Ranges, a marine medley, still ascending from the adjacent sea.

VERTICAL EXAGGERATION 10X

In this cross-section, the Coast Ranges occupy forty miles, the valley fifty miles, the mountains ninety. All of it added together is not a great distance. It is not as much as New York to Boston. It is Harrisburg to Pittsburgh. In breadth and in profile, a comparable country lies between Genoa and Zurich—the Apennines, the Po Plain, the Alps.

An old VW bus is best off climbing the Sierra from the west. Often likened to a raised trapdoor, the Sierra has a long and planar western slope and—near the state line—a plunging escarpment facing east. The shape of the Sierra is also like an airfoil, or a woodshed, with its long sloping back and its sheer front. The nineteenth-century geologist Clarence King compared it to "a sea-wave"—a crested ocean roller about to break upon Nevada. The image of the trapdoor best serves the tectonics. Hinged somewhere beneath the Great Valley, and sharply faulted on its eastern face, the range began to rise only a very short geologic time ago—perhaps three million years, or four million years—and it is still rising, still active, continually at play with the Richter scale and occasionally driven by great earthquakes (Owens Valley, 1872). In geologic ages just before the uplift, volcanic andesite flows spread themselves over the terrain like butterscotch syrup over ice cream. Successive andesite flows filled in local landscapes and hardened flat upon them. As the trapdoor rises—as this immense crustal block, the Sierra Nevada, tilts upward—the andesite flows tilt with it, and to see them now in the roadcuts of the interstate is to see the angle of the uplift.

Bear in mind how young all this is. Until the latter part of the present geologic era, there was no Sierra Nevada—no mountain range, no rain shadow, no ten-thousand-foot wall. Big rivers ran west through the space now filled by the mountains. They crossed a plain to the ocean.

Remember about mountains: what they are made of is not what made them. With the exception of volcanoes, when mountains rise, as a result of some tectonic force, they consist of what happened to be there. If bands of phyllites and folded metasediments happen to be there, up they go as part of the mountains. If serpentinized peridotites and gold-bearing gravels happen to be there, up they go as part of the mountains. If a great granite batholith happens to be there, up it goes as part of the mountains. And while everything is going up it is being eroded as well, by water and (sometimes) ice. Cirques are cut, and U-shaped valleys, ravines, minarets. Parts tumble on one another, increasing, with each confusion, the landscape's beauty.

On the first of our numerous trips to the Sierra, Moores pulled over to the shoulder of the interstate to have a look at the outcrop that had frustrated Ken Deffeyes—the one that Deffeyes had identified as glop. It was sixteen miles west of Donner Summit, beside a bridge over the road to Yuba Gap. Moores in the field looks something like what Sigmund Freud might have looked like had Freud gone into geology. Above Moores' round face and gray-rimmed glasses and diagnostic beard is a white, broad-brimmed, canvas fedora featuring a panama block. There are weather creases at the edges of his eyes. He typically wears plaid shirts, blue twill trousers, blue running shoes. On one hip is a notebook bag, on the other a Brunton compass in a cracked

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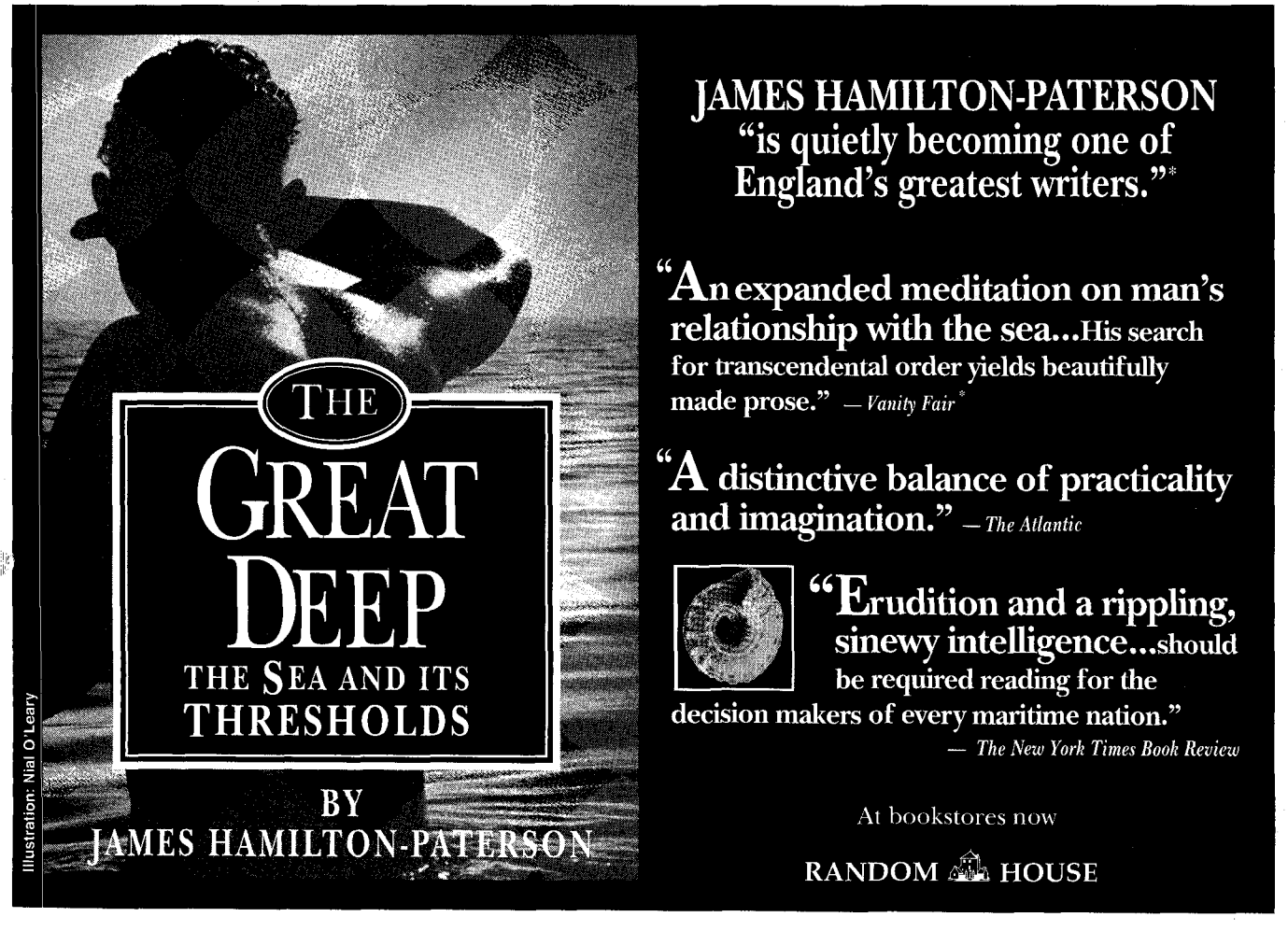
leather case. He is a chunky man with a long large chest and a short stretch between his hips and the terrain. From cords around his neck dangle two Hastings Triplets, the small and powerful lenses that geologists hold close to outcrops in order to study crystals. He did not need them to see what was incorporated in this massive paradox of glop. It contained jagged rock splinters and smoothly rounded pebbles as well. "It's hard at first blush to tell that it's mudflow and not wholly glacial," Moores said. "It is mostly andesite mudflow breccia with reworked stream gravel in it and glacial till on top, which appears to be moraine but is not."

In the early Pliocene, a volcano grew into the range there. It has long since eroded away. Andesite lavas poured from the volcano. Lighter eruptive material settled around the crater. In the moist atmosphere, the volcano's eruptions caused prolonged heavy rains. The water mobilized the unstable slopes. Volcanic muds—full of the sharp rock fragments that would cement together as breccia—slid into the country. In quiet periods between eruptions, streams flowing down the volcano tumbled some of the rock fragments, rounding pebbles. In recent time, alpine glaciers dug into the country and dozed away much of what was left of the volcano, and as the ice melted it left upon the brecciated mudflows heaps of lateral till. ("It is mostly andesite mudflow breccia with reworked stream gravel in it and glacial till on top, which appears to be moraine but is not.")

All this had happened in one areal spot. All this was represented in that one roadcut. Anyone could be pardoned if, at first glance, the complete narrative seemed less than apparent. The story had repeated itself through much of the Sierra during the same band of time: other volcanoes extruding andesite and shedding mud, their remains disturbed by ice. It was a surface story, a latter-day account. The brecciated mudflows and andesite lavaflows had come to rest on rock that was older by as much as five hundred million years—rock with a deep and different story, rock that just happened to be there when the mountains rose. In the discipline of stratigraphy, gaps in time are known as unconformities. The layers of the Grand Canyon are full of such temporal gaps. Much more time is absent there than is represented. If a gap of five hundred million years were the right five hundred million years, it could erase the Grand Canyon. In eastern California, the infinitesimal space between the andesite flows and the rock on which they hardened is known as the Great Sierra Nevada Unconformity. To understand what that was and how it had come to be was to understand the relationship between just two of the parts in a millipartite structure.

Moores and I went on to California's eastern boundary, turned around, and recrossed the Sierra, as we would do repeatedly in the coming years. Climbing the steep east face of the mountains, you see granite and more granite and andesite capping the granite. So far so comprehensible. But before you have crossed the range you have seen rock of such varied type, age, and provenance that time itself becomes nervous—Pliocene, Miocene, Eocene nonmarine, Jurassic here, Triassic there, Ypresian, Lutetian, Tithonian, Rhaetian, Messinian, Maastrichtian, Valanginian, Kimmeridgian, upper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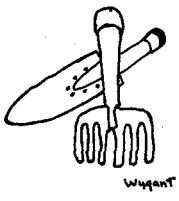
Paleozoic. The rocks seem to change as fast as the traffic. You see olivine-rich, badly deformed metamorphic rock. You see serpentine. Gabbro. One thing follows another in a manner that seems random—a collection of relics from varied ages and many ancestral landscapes, transported from far or near, set beside or upon one another, lifted en masse in fresh young mountains and exposed in roadcuts by the state. You cannot be expected, just by looking at it, to fit it all together in mobile space and sequential time, to see in the congestion within this lithic barn—this Sierra Nevada, this atticful of objects from around the Pacific world—the events and the vistas that each item represents.



Suppose you were to find in a spacious loft a whale-oil lamp of pressed lead glass. What would you think, know, guess, and wonder about the origin and the travels of that lamp? And suppose you were to find near it a Joseph Meeks laminated-rosewood chair, and an English silver porringer and stand, and an eight-lobed dish with birds in a flowering thicket. It is possible that you would not immediately think 1850, 1833, 1662, and 1620. It is possible that you would not envision the place in which each object was made or the milieu in which it was first used, and even more possible that you would not discern how or when any of these pieces moved through the world and came to be in this loft. You also see, lined up in close ranks, a Queen Anne maple side chair, a Federal mahogany shield-back side chair, a Chippendale shell-carved walnut side chair, and a William and Mary carved and caned American armchair. Stratigraphically, they are out of order. How did that happen? Why are they here? Only one thing is indisputable: this is some loft. Jammed to the trusses, it also contains a Queen Anne carved-mahogany block-front kneehole dressing table, a Hepplewhite mahogany-and-satinwood breakfront bookcase, a rosewood Neo-Gothic chair, an Empire mahogany step-back cupboard, and a Regency mahogany metamorphic library bergère. It contains a classical brass-mounted mahogany gilt wood-and-gesso bed with pressed-brass repoussé. It contains a Federal cherry-wood-and-bird's-eye-maple bowfront chest of drawers, an early Victorian mahogany dining chair with a compressed balloon back, a Federal carved and inlaid curly-maple-and-walnut fall-front desk, a Windsor sack-back writing armchair, and a Louis XV ormolu-mounted kingwood parquetry commode. There's a temple bell dating to Auspicion Day of the fifth month of the first year of Tembrun. There's a Federal carved-mahogany armchair with a cornucopian splat.

Sort that out. Complete a title search for each piece. Tell each story backward through shifting space to differing points in time. Imagine the palace, the pavilion, the house, the hall for which each piece was fashioned, the climate and location of the country outside.

Naturally, you can't do that—not in a single reconnaissance. Don't fret it. Don't fret that you can't see the story whole. You cannot tell whence each of these items has come, any more than its maker could have known where it would go.

"Nature is messy," Moores remarked. "Don't expect it to be uniform and consistent."

I remembered the sedimentologist Karen Kleinspehn saying to me in these same mountains, "You can't cope with this in an organized way, because the rocks aren't organized."

Gradually, though—outcrop to outcrop, roadcut to roadcut—Moores revived enough related scenes in the distinct origins of the random rock to frame a cohesive chronological story. That is what geologists do. "You spend a lot of time working over rocks and you have a lot of time to do nothing but think," he said. "These mountains, for example, are Tertiary normal faulted, confusing the topography with regard to structure. They show different levels of structure in different places. To see through the topography and see how the rocks lie in three dimensions beneath the topography is the hardest thing to get across to a student." After a mile of silence, he added cryptically, "Left-handed people do it better."

I said nothing for a while, and then asked him, "Are you left-handed?"

He said, "I'm ambidextrous."

As it happens, I am left-handed, but I kept it to myself.

From the east, the climb is rapid to Donner Summit—less than thirty miles, and the road is not straight. Yet elsewhere along the Sierra front the rise is so much shorter and steeper that nothing on wheels could ever climb it. From the basin below (altitude four thousand feet), you bend your neck and look ten thousand feet up a granite mass that was lifted intact, whereas here, on the route above Reno, the "Tertiary normal faulting" that Moores referred to has tiered the escarpment and lowered the crestline as well. The early trappers found a native trail here. In all likelihood, the natives who made the trail were animals, followed, in time, by people.

Under ponderosas and Western cedars at the Nevada-California line, the granite reveals itself and then is quickly gone, as the roadside rock becomes something like dark cordwood, fallen in columnar blocks. This is the caprock andesite, which cracks into columns as it cools. Another five miles, and the interstate moves through a long cut that is buff, gray, buff, gray, and buff again as lavaflows and mudflows intersperse. Perhaps a hundred thousand years separate the lavaflows, while the laminating muds come ten times as often. The volcanic cap over the granite is still a kilometre thick here. Among the trees are erratic boulders—granite boulders out of place on the andesite, transported a few thousand years ago by a descending ribbon of ice.

Three miles before the summit, the granite reappears, not in ice-transported bits but in bedrock at the side of the road. And then more granite, under Jeffrey pines—weathered granite, light and sparkling sliced granite. It ends abruptly, at a contact with andesite. This particular granite had been sitting here eroding quietly for maybe ninety million years when the andesite lava flowed upon it, coating hills and filling valleys, plastering over the granitic terrain, concealing and preserving a Miocene landscape. Differentially, randomly, erosion has eaten through the caprock. So the road encounters both formations. Granite reappears at the summit.

Donner Summit, at seven thousand two hundred and thirty-nine feet, is half the height of the range. Locally, engineers found a way for the interstate which is considerably less precipitous than the trail used by the emigrants in the eighteen-forties. The place that came to be known as Donner Pass is a couple of miles south, on a relic stretch of U.S. 40. Moores and I once went over there and stood on a cliff edge, looking east. Tens of thousands of square miles of basin-

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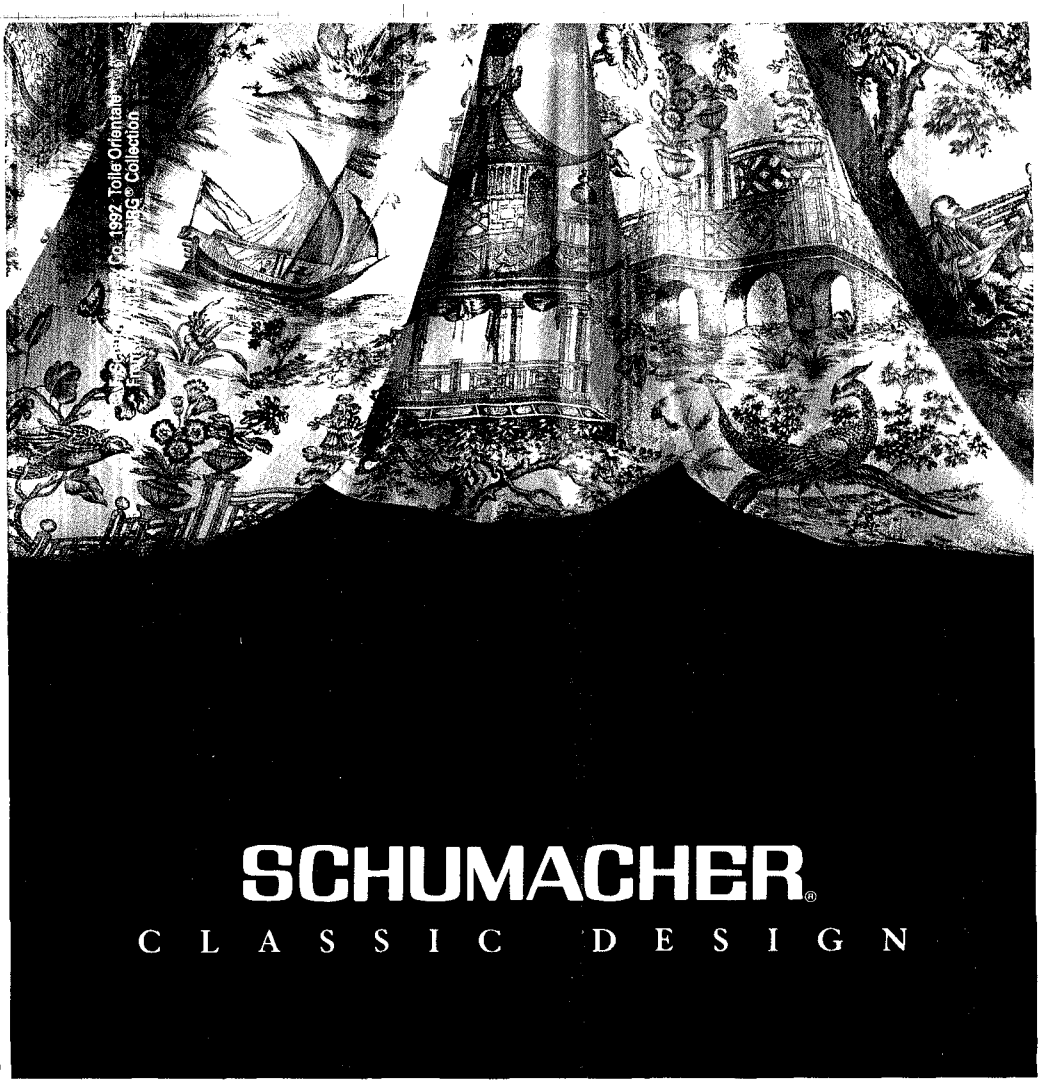
and-range topography fanned out into Nevada, all of it aimed, within converging lines, at the pass. The drop to Donner Lake, more than a thousand feet below, was almost giddy. To get over the pass, everything on feet or wheels had to come up that grade. In a normal year, about seventy inches of water falls on the High Sierra, nearly all of it as snow. Seventy inches of water is roughly one and a half times what falls on New York City and twice what falls on Seattle. The snow on the Sierra Nevada can be forty feet deep. At the end of October, 1846, the Donner Party came up to this pass and were forced to retreat by a mountain of snow. The winter camp where they starved and died was by the shore of Donner Lake, in the cirque below the pass.

In deep winter, I have stayed near Donner Lake in a ski condo where a previous guest left a peevish note: "The peace and beauty are marred by a noisy refrigerator and heating unit." Now, in midsummer, there were, around the pass, spreads of tenacious snow. A bicyclist, standing as he pumped but scarcely puffing, came up the route of the emigrants. Seating himself as he reached the zenith, he coasted on to the west. To the east, the deep gulf of scenery that he had come out of owed itself less to the finishing touches of ice than to large parallel north-south faults that had lowered a large piece of country—a crustal block, dropped between two other crustal blocks, and now a graben. Lake Tahoe, south across a partitioning ridge from Donner Lake, lies in the same graben. The small lake and the large one would be connected but for a recent pouring of andesite, which formed the ridge.

Moores said to notice how the mechanical lowering of a large piece of the mountains had caused varying levels of the original structure to turn up in unexpected places. To try to sense a structure, he repeated, one must develop a talent for "seeing through the topography" and into the rock on which the topography was carved. When rocks in their variety arrive in a given place, like furniture going into storage, they hold within themselves their individual histories: their dates of solidification, their environments of deposition, or their metamorphic experience, as the case may be. Their unit-to-unit relationship—their stratigraphy and other juxtaposi-



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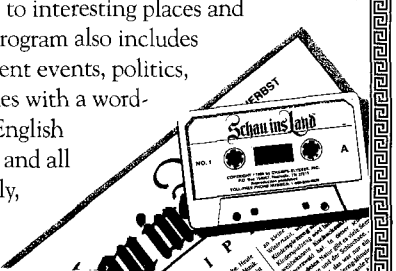

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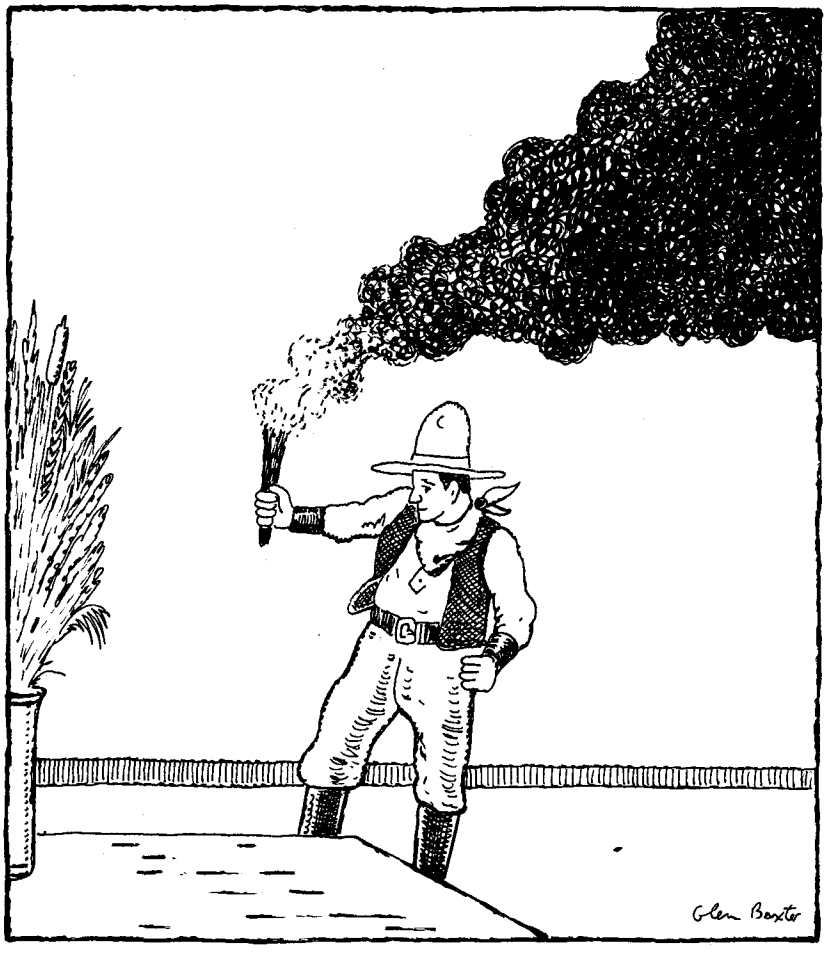

JED WAS ALWAYS THERE TO ADD THE FINISHING TOUCHES TO THE DRIED-FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS.

• •

tions—pondered as a whole is structure. Structure on the move is tectonics.

When topography is as beautiful as at Donner Pass, it is not an easy matter to see through it, but if you're looking for structure you might start with the granite. In all the country from Nevada to the pass, the volcanic cap makes its appearances, but always as veneer—eroding everywhere, opening windows, and ultimately suggesting the bewildering mass of the underlying granite. This is the Sierra batholith. Geologists reserve that term for the largest bodies of magmatic rock. A batholith, as defined in the science, has a surface of at least forty square miles and no known bottom. For the latter reason, it is also called an abyssolith. The one in California has a surface of about twenty-five thousand square miles. It lies inside the Sierra like a big zeppelin. Geologists in their field boots mapping outcrops may not have been able to find a bottom, but geophysicists can, or think they can, and they say it is six miles down. If so, the batholith weighs a quadrillion tons, and its volume is at least a hundred and fifty thousand cubic miles.

It reminds me of a big rigid airship because the rigids contained, within their metal frames, rows of giant bags that resembled aerial balloons. Batholiths develop not as single chambers of magma but as contiguous balloons of molten rock called plutons. As red-hot rising fluid, the great Sierra batholith came into the country in successive pulses during a hundred and thirty million years between early Jurassic and latest Cretaceous time. There were three peak periods—the first nearly two hundred million years before the present, the second at a hundred and forty million years before the present, and the third at eighty. The most extensive is the "80 pulse." All this went on some ten to thirty kilometres below the earth's surface, where continental crust and subducting ocean crust (coming under the continent) were melting. Through Maastrichtian time and nearly all the Cenozoic epochs, the cooled and cooling magma lay buried. The topography above changed and changed again, like a carrousel of slides. And eventually, recently, the batholith came up, to serve as the lithic medium for the erosive sculpting of Olancha Peak, of Wheeler Peak, of Mt. Whitney.

Dark cliffs above Donner Pass were Pliocene volcanics, but the rock beside the trail was granite—poetically weathered organic billows of granite. There were small black shapes within it, like raisins. Thousands of them. Alien pebbles. These were bits of the country rock that the batholith intruded. They had fallen into the magma while it was still molten or, if cooler than that, sufficiently yielding to be receptive. They had been softened and rounded but not melted and destroyed. On Interstate 80 west of Donner Summit, we saw larger chips of such metasediment in the granite of the roadcuts. Another mile, and they were larger still. Moores referred to them as "abundant xenoliths—Jura-Triassic pieces of the wall or the roof." These were not the andesites and other outpourings that had been spread upon the granite in fairly recent times; these were parts of the intruding batholith's containing walls or roof. They had fallen into the soft granite eighty million years ago, and, before that, had been crustal rock for something like a hundred million years.

In the interstate median, under Jeffrey pines, were bedrock outcrops that had been scoured and polished by overriding ice eleven thousand years ago. There were plenty of erratic boulders. For eleven miles after Donner Summit, the xenoliths in the granite increased in volume until what we had first seen as pebbles were now the size of bears. To sense the implication of what was coming, a structural geologist would need no further sign. We were fast approaching the wall of the batholith—the magma's contact with the country rock. That highway engineers would blast out a roadcut at just such a place is fortuitous, a matter of random chance, but when Ken Deffeyes and I had come into this same right-hand bend he had shouted, "Whoa! Whoa! Pull over!" And a moment later he was saying, "This is the best out-

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crop on all of I-80. You can walk up and touch the wall of the great batholith."

Moores now called it "about as classic and neat a contact as you'll ever see." As cars shot past us like MIGs, he added, "Right here. Bang!" The contact was essentially vertical. It ran on up the mountainside and vanished under the trees. It could not have been more distinct had it been the line between a granite building and a brick building adjacent in a city. The granite of the batholith looked almost white beside the reddish country rock, which Moores described as the metamorphosed remains of what had once been an island arc. The granite was customary, competent—a lot of salt and less pepper. The arc rock was flaky, slaty—like aged iron in a state of ulcerated rust. In the first yards after the contact, tongues of granite reached into the country rock, preserved in the act of eating xenoliths. Within a short distance, they gave up.

As the rock ran on in the long continuous cut, it turned black, burgundy, buff, and green, in vertical stripes, in tight drapefolds with long limbs. Obviously, it had been caught up—before the arrival of the batholith—not in some minor local slumpage but in a regional and pervasive tectonic event. With two more miles, the story again made a radical change, as we came to a roadcut of gabbro. Charcoal-gray and sparkling, it was perfect gabbro. There are rich, handsome houses on the Upper East Side of Manhattan that are made of less perfect gabbro. Gabbro, too, is cooled magma. Lacking quartz, it is at the dark end of a spectrum the light end of which is, for the most part, granite. Peridotite—the rock of the earth's mantle—was in the roadcut as well, and Moores said that in his opinion these mafics and ultramafics (rocks low in silica and high in magnesium and iron) arrived after the event that had drapefolded the rock up the road and before the intrusion of the batholith. As we moved on, the gabbro-peridotite interdigitated with granite and then disappeared as the road once again descended into the Sierra batholith. After corridors of granite, there were more volcanics, in the topographic scramble of structure.

When panoramic views came along, they showed the uniformity of the sixty-mile slope—the low-angle plane of the western Sierra. The great surface (the top of the trapdoor) was completed in the eye rather than the rock. It was deeply eaten out by river gorges. To the north and the south, the vistas were wide over deep valleys to tilting planar skylines. We came to Emigrant Gap, where the erosional dissection was particularly deep. Nineteen miles from Donner Pass, the scene demonstrated with emphasis that once emigrants were across the summit they were scarcely free of trouble. From Emigrant Gap into Bear Valley they lowered their wagons on ropes. We looked into the valley, where an alpine meadow was flanked with incense cedars. Above it to the north, under the smoothly sloping skyline, were west-dipping sediments that Moores described as mudflow breccias over Paleozoic sandstones. A deep gorge cut through this ridge. It contained the Yuba River, where the Yuba had captured the Bear. The two rivers, each eroding headward from opposite sides of the ridge, had struggled toward each other until the divide between them broke down, and the Bear, giving up its direction of flow, joined the Yuba and went the other way. To the northeast, under high white peaks, was a lake gouged in granite by an alpine glacier, which had left its moraines on the volcanic muds among the sharp shards and round pebbles that had caused Deffeyes to throw in his towel. Rocks between us and that lake, Moores said, were "lower Paleozoic quartz-rich sediments metamorphosed and folded at least twice." And the rocks in the peaks above the lake were remains of a Jurassic island arc.

Moores spoke reflectively of "the joy of being alone with the geology," of spending enough time walking such a scene to learn how some of it fits together, and then adding what you can to the scientific literature, "which is not like a solo but like an orchestral piece." To Moores, what had happened to create California where no surviving rock had been before was much in evidence in the scene around us, as it had been in the rocks we saw along the road. As terrane—a homonym that refers not merely to surface configurations but to a full three-dimensional piece of the earth's crust—this region had become known in

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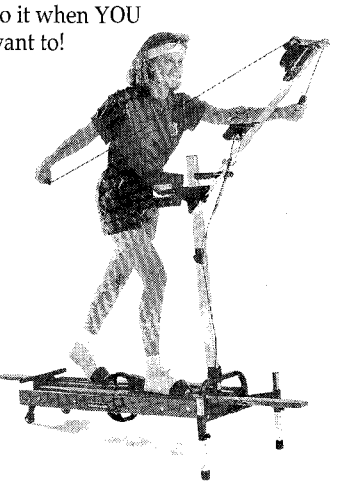

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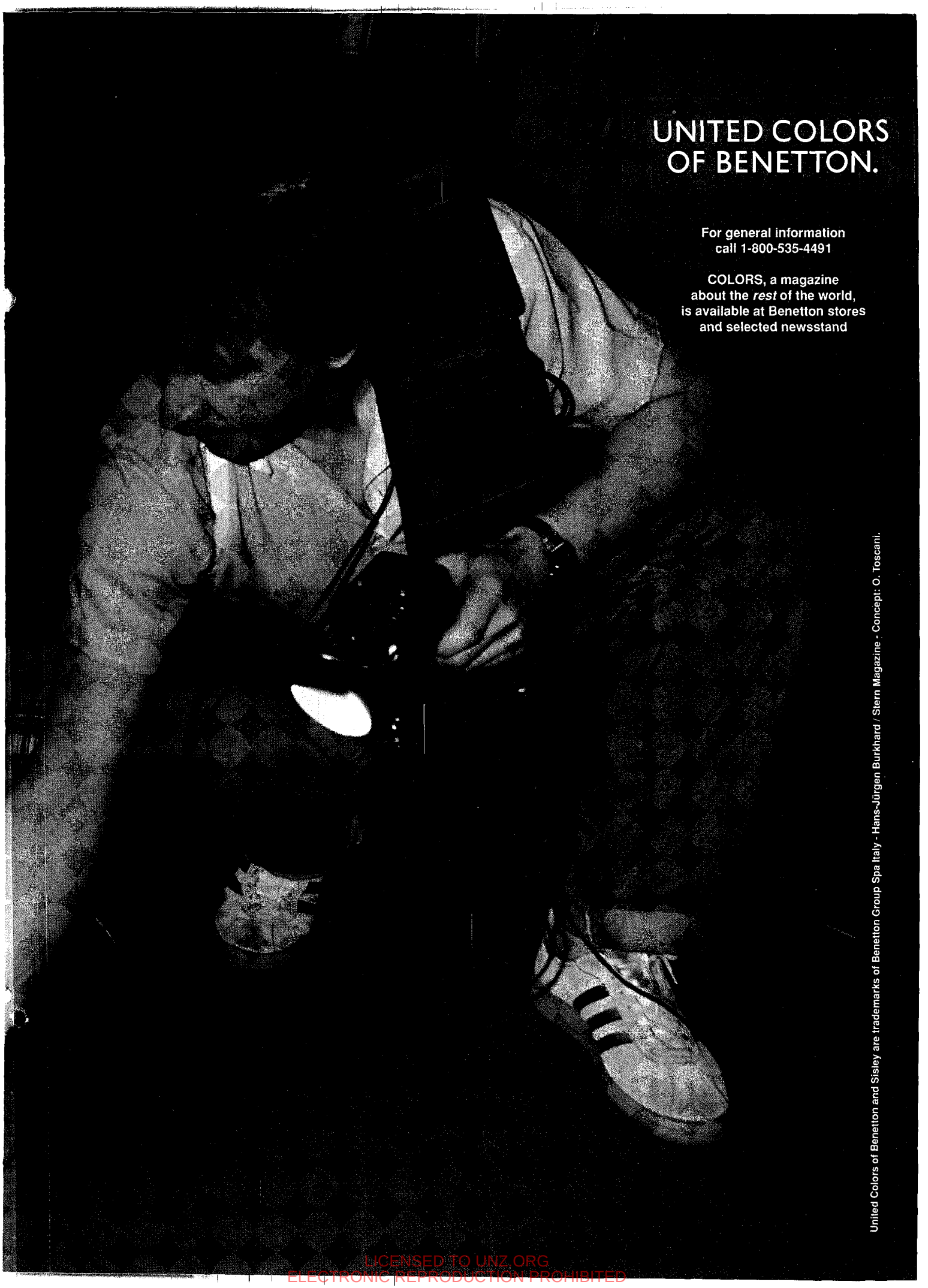
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geology as Sonomia. It reached from the Sonoma Range in central Nevada to the Sierra foothills west of where we stood. As plate theorists reconstruct plate motions backward through time, they see landmasses converging to form superterranes and breaking apart to form new continents. Swept up in these great events are islands and island arcs—Newfoundlands, Madagascars, New Zealands, Sumatras, Japans—that slide in or collide in toward continental cores. They become the outermost laminations of new landscapes.

When terranes coming via the ocean attach themselves to a continent, they are said to have "docked." Never shy about metaphors, geologists refer to the docking place as a "suture." At the end of Permian time, in the narrative according to present theory, Sonomia docked against western North America. The suture is on the longitude where Golconda, Nevada, is now. For a century or so before plate tectonics, the obviously overriding rock was known as the Golconda Thrust. It was an event that happened about two hundred and fifty million years before the present. Sonomia was an island arc. North to south, Moores said, it might have stretched two thousand miles. It brought with it those Paleozoic sandstones above Bear Valley and the quartz-rich sediments we could also see to the northeast. Volcanoes grew in the newly docked terrane. Bits of them would become the xenoliths in the granites of the summit. Along the western margin of Sonomia, where ocean crust was subducting in a trench, more volcanoes developed. Their rock was in peaks above us. Roughly where we stood, a coastal region of exceptional beauty had lain at the base of the volcanoes. Stratovolcanoes. Kilimanjaros and Fujis.

Sonomia was actually the second terrane to attach itself to the western edge of ancestral North America. The first had arrived in latest Devonian time. It had thrust itself almost to Utah. At this latitude, a third terrane would follow Sonomia in the Mesozoic, smashing into it with crumpling, mountain-building effects that would propagate eastward through the whole of Sonomia, metamorphosing its sediments—turning siltstones into slates, sandstones into quartzites—and folding them at least twice: the multicolored drapefolds we had seen beside the road. This was the country rock the batholith intruded.

AT THE OPTOMETRIST'S

This is a fearful place.
From the lit shelves stare
a hundred eyeglasses—
the voyeurs fled but left
their startled glances.

Vigilantes of the Second Coming,
they have their reward.
In the twinkling of an eye
we shall all be changed.
And everything twinkles here,
the dynasties of gold frames

in the tricky mirrors,
the tinted lenses on velvet
plates, like the scales
said to fall from our eyes
in moments of truth.

No bait catches the fish
who swims in invisible waters.
The scales he sheds
are powerful slices of light.
"Pick your frames," says the doctor,
who loves to paint

and for their burnished gold
leaf frames buys old
landscapes lost to sight
under cataracts of varnish.
The frames he hands me weigh

less than the sparrow
whose engine of small bones
I buried last April
under the bare maples,
all of us squinting
into the new light.

—Nancy Willard

• •

A granite batholith will not appear just anywhere. You will wait an eternity for one to develop under Kansas. A great tectonic event must come first. Then granite—or, rather, the magma that will cool and produce granite—comes in beneath the mountains. Volcanoes appear at the surface. Lava flows.

To create the magma, you must in some way melt the bottom of the crust. Subduction—one plate sliding beneath another—will cause things to melt. And so will a collision that compresses and thickens terrane. After a continent-to-continent collision, the crust might double; a batholith will come up within thirty million years. In deep burial, the heat from such radioactive and universal elements as uranium, potassium, and thorium is trapped. The heat increases until the rocks melt themselves and their surroundings. Granite should be forming under Tibet at present, where India has hit the Eurasian Plate in a collision that is not yet over. Under California, both thickened crust and plate-under-plate subduction contributed to the making of the batholith, at first after Sonomia came in and sutured on and deformed itself, and again after Sonomia was hit from the west and further deformed.

The Sierra batholith is melted crust of oceanic origin as well as continental. Most of the world's great batholiths are not quite true granite but edge on down the darkening spectrum and, strictly speaking, are granodiorite. Too strictly for me. But that is the rock of the High Sierra, which almost everyone refers to as granite.

After the batholith came nothing during the many millions of years of the Great Sierra Nevada Unconformity. At any rate, nothing from those years was left for us to see. The rock record jumps from the batholith to the andesite flows of recent time, patches of which Moores pointed out from the lookoff at Emigrant Gap. A few million years ago, when lands to the east of us began to stretch apart and break into blocks, producing the province of the Basin and Range, the Sierra Nevada was the westernmost block to rise, lifting within itself the folds and faults of the Mesozoic dockings, the roots of mountains that had long since disappeared. The chronology at Emigrant Gap ends with the signatures of glaciation on the new mountains—the bestrewn boulders and dumped tills, the horns, the arêtes, the deep wide U of the Bear Valley.

I remarked that geologists are like dermatologists: they study, for the most part, the outermost two per cent of the earth. They crawl around like fleas on the world's tough hide, exploring every wrinkle and crease, and try to figure out what makes the animal move.

Moores said he begged to differ. He said the whole earth is involved in plate tectonics. The earthquake slips of subducting plates could be read as deep as five hundred miles, and seismic data were now indicating that the plates' cold ocean-crustal slabs descend all the way to the core-mantle boundary. Bumps on the core may be related to

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the activity of hot spots like Hawaii, Yellowstone, and Iceland. He said he wouldn't call that dermatology.

Since Moores had learned geology in the late nineteen-fifties and early nineteen-sixties, when the theory of plate tectonics was still in a formative unheralded stage, I asked him what he had been taught. How had his teachers at the California Institute of Technology explained—in what is now known as "the old geology"—the building of mountains, the rise of volcanoes, the construction of North America west of Salt Lake?

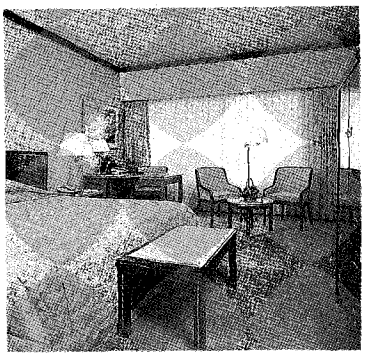
Geologists used to accept the idea that the earth's skin contracted, he said—"shrivelled up like the skin of an apple" was the favorite simile—and the wrinkles were mountains. This was said to have happened in different places at differing times, and the wrinkling process was known as an orogeny. The rise of the mountains in Utah and Nevada, where that first exotic terrane came in, was known in the old geology as the Antler Orogeny. The next wrinkling of the regional skin was the Sonoma Orogeny. The Appalachians were built in the Avalonian, Taconic, Acadian, and Alleghenian Orogenies. The Rockies were built in the Laramide Orogeny. Mountain-building mechanisms have been restyled, but these terms for them survive.

If wrinkling was the force that lifted mountain belts, it did not explain their great volume. In the second half of the nineteenth century, James Hall, the state geologist of New York, theoretically resolved that question when he conceived of what came to be called the geosynclinal cycle, and so put in place the geology that prevailed until 1968, when plate tectonics was nailed to the church door. Since mountain belts tended to rise at the margins of continents and to contain, among other things, folded marine sediments and intruding batholiths, Hall imagined a long wide seafloor trough, a deep dimple, in which vast amounts of sediment would pile up and where magmas would intrude. After a sufficient amount of material had collected, it was ready to rise, to wrinkle as mountains. Wary of the apple-skin hypothesis, many geologists preferred to think that as a geosyncline gained weight it would press down on the mantle until its volume was so great that it would rebound isostatically, like a huge buoyant log coming up from underwater. Wary of isostasy as well, many more geologists would not venture further than to say (indisputably) that "earth forces" or "orogenic forces" had lifted the geosynclines, and that these forces were "not well understood."

The geosyncline, like any admirable and serviceable fiction, contained a lot of truth. From stratigraphy to structure, geology was understood in terms of geosynclines for about a hundred years. You found gold with your knowledge of geosynclines. You found silver, antimony, and oil. You started conceptually with a geosyncline and projected events forward in time until you saw the geosyncline shuffled up in the mountains before you. Or you started with the mountains, disassembled them in your mind, and made palinspastic reconstructions, backward in time, as far as the geosyncline. The entire procedure—from the making of rock to the making of mountains to the destruction of mountains to the making of fresh formations of rock—was the geosynclinal cycle.

Inevitably, the concept was improved, refined, unsimplified. The archetypical geosyncline was deep in the middle and shallow at the sides, and grew different kinds of rocks in various places. The German tectonicist Hans Stille proposed the names miogeosyncline and eugeosyncline for the shallows and the deeps. The vocabulary was universally accepted. Miogeosynclines were the source of shallow-water sediments (limestone, for example) and no volcanics. In the eugeosynclines, volcanism occurred, and deep-water sediments, like chert, collected. In the twentieth century, as the science matured and thickened, mio- and eu- became inadequate to prefix all the differing synclinal scenes that new generations of geonovelists were describing. The germinant term was soon popping like corn. The professional conversation came to include parageosynclines, orthogeosynclines, taphrogeosynclines, leptogeosynclines, zeugogeosynclines, paraliageosynclines, and epieugeosynclines.

Moores had entered Caltech in 1955. "In the old geology, one learned of the eugeosyncline and miogeosyncline of



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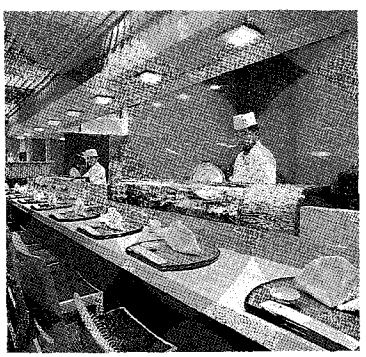

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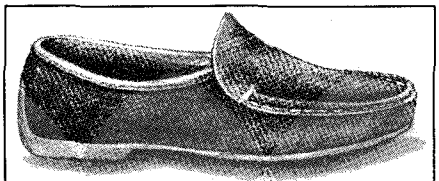

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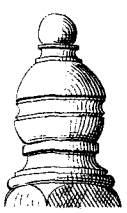

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western North America, which started in the late Precambrian and went through the Cretaceous," he said, in recapitulation. "Rock deformed by orogeny—folding and thrusting—from the center of the eugeosyncline out toward the continental shelf. The mechanism was 'orogenic forces.' Here in the Sierra, for example, you had a eugeosyncline and a miogeosyncline, and the eugeosyncline was thrust on the miogeosyncline. And that was the Golconda Thrust. No one knew how this 'orogeny' happened."

If California rock was disassembled on paper and palinspastically reassembled as the original geosyncline, there were shallow-water sediments followed by deep-water material, but there was no other side. "That was never explained," Moores went on. "Also, the geosynclinal cycle was said to be about two hundred million years. In the Overthrust Belt in Montana, forty thousand feet of Precambrian sediment had been thrust over Cretaceous sediment. As students, we wondered why all that Precambrian was still there. What had the source geosyncline been doing sitting there for a billion years when the cycle was two hundred million? There was no answer."

Hall's idea was not preposterous. It was incomplete. There was, after all, marine rock in mountains. Between the geosyncline and the mountains, though, something was missing, and what was missing was plate tectonics.

WE continued west from Emigrant Gap through cuts in unsorted glacial till, buff and bouldery, and past the many blue doors of the pink garage of the Transportation Department's mountain center for snowplows and road maintenance, situated, with its cavalry of trucks, within a slowly moving earthflow, a creeping descent of unstable moraine, a sedate landslide. "The engineers strike again," Moores said, but in scarcely three miles his contempt went into a subduction zone, melted, and came back up as appreciation for a long high competent roadcut that exposed bright beds of rhyolite tuff. Twenty-nine million years ago, this air-fall ash came out of a volcano in what is now Nevada, he said, as he pulled over to the side of the road, got out, and put his nose on the engineered outcrop. While he examined the tuff through his hand lens, an eighteen-wheeler that had also come from Nevada was smoking down the mountain grade. Its brakes were furiously burning, and emitted a dark cloud. Long after the truck had gone, the cloud hung stinking in the air. The ash had been launched in several eruptive episodes. Blown west, it had landed hot, and had welded solid in successive bands. Here, more than sixty miles from the source volcano, a single ashfall was more than a metre thick. The ash had settled, of course, horizontally. Having risen with the Sierra, it was now tilting west. We descended past the four-thousand-foot contour, moving on among volcanic rocks five times older than the tuff and of more proximate origin: rock of the Sonomia Terrane altered in the heat and pressure of the assembly of California and weathered along the interstate into an abstract medley of red and orange and buff and white.

Now thirty miles west of Donner Summit, we were well into the country rock of California gold—the rock that was there when, in various ways, the gold itself arrived. The most obvious place to look for it was in fluviatile placers—the rubble of running streams. In such a setting it had been discovered. *Placer*, which is pronounced like Nasser and Vassar, was a Spanish nautical term meaning "sandbank." More commonly, it meant "pleasure." Both meanings seem relevant in the term "placer mining," for to separate free gold from loose sand is a good deal easier than to crack it out of hard rock. Some of the gold in the running streams of the western Sierra was traceable to the host formations from which it had eroded—traceable, for example, to nearby quartz veins that had grouted ancient fissures. Within two years of the discovery of gold in river gravel, gunpowder was blasting the hard-rock fissures. Into the quiet country of the low Sierra—between the elevations of one thousand and four thousand feet—gold seekers spread more rapidly than an explosion of moles. Their technology was as rampant as they were, and in its swift development anticipated the century to come. In 1848, the primary instrument for mining gold was a sheath knife. You pried yellow metal out of crevices. Within a year or two, successively, came the pan, the rocker, the long tom, and the sluice—variously invented, reinvented, and introduced.

There was also a third source of gold. It was found in dry gravel far

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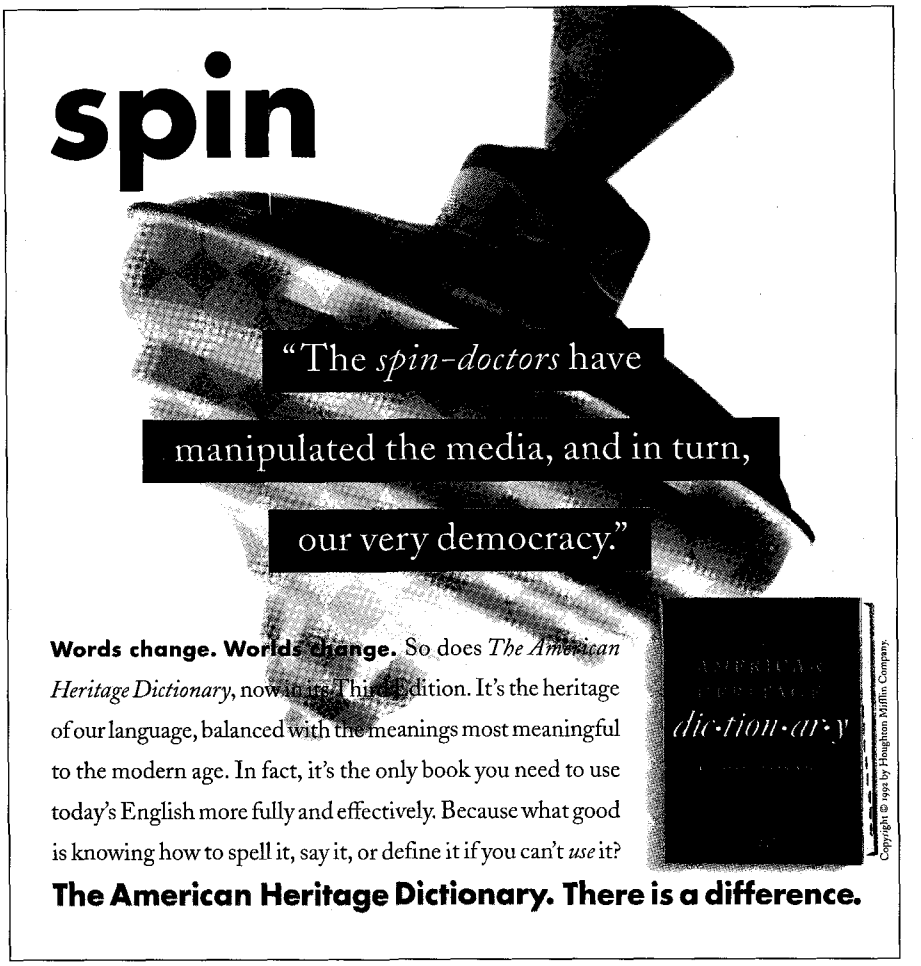
above existing streams—on high slopes, sometimes even on ridges. The gravel lay in discontinuous pods. Geologists, with their dotted lines, would eventually connect them. In cross-section, they were hull-shaped or V-shaped, and in some places the deposits were more than a mile wide. They had the colors of American bunting: they were red to the point of rutilance, and white as well, and, in their lowest places, navy blue. They were the beds of fossil rivers, and the rivers were very much larger than the largest of the living streams of the Sierra. They were Yukons, Eocene in age. Fifty million years before the present, they had come down from the east off a very high plateau to cross low country that is now California and leave their sorted bedloads on a tropical coastal plain. Forty million years later, when the Sierra Nevada rose as a block tilting westward, it lifted what was left of that coastal plain. It included the beds of the Eocene rivers, which were fated to become so celebrated that they would be known in world geology less often as "the Eocene riverbeds of California" than as, simply, "the auriferous gravels." Fore-set, bottom-set, point bar to cutbank, under the suction eddies—gold in varying assay was everywhere you looked within the auriferous gravels: ten cents a ton in the high stuff, dollars a ton somewhat lower, concentrated riches in the deep "blue lead."

To separate gold from gravel, you wash it. But you don't wash a bone-dry enlofted Yukon with the flow of little streams bearing names like Shirt Tail Creek. Mining the auriferous gravels was the technological challenge of the eighteen-fifties. The miners impounded water in the high country, then brought it to the gravels in ditches and flumes. In five years, they built five thousand miles of ditches and flumes. From a ditch about four hundred feet above the bed of a fossil river, water would come down through a hose to a nozzle, from which it emerged as a jet at a hundred and twenty miles an hour. The jet had the diameter of a dinner plate and felt as hard. If you touched the water near the nozzle, your fingers were burned. This was hydraulic artillery. Turned against gravel slopes, it brought them down. In a contemporary account, it was described as "washing down the auriferous hills of the gravel range" and mining "the dead rivers of the Sierra



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Nevada." A hundred and six million ounces of gold—a third of all the gold that has ever been mined in the United States—came from the Sierra Nevada. A quarter of that was flushed out by hydraulic mining.

The dry bed of an Eocene river carries Interstate 80 past Gold Run. The roadside records the abrupt change. As if you were swinging off a riverbank and dropping into the water, you go out of the metavolcanic rock and into the auriferous gravels. We stopped, stood on the shoulder, and looked about a hundred feet up an escarpment that resembled an excavated roadcut but had not been excavated by highway engineers. It was capped by a mat of forest floor, raggedly overhanging. The forest, if you could call it that, was a narrow stand of ponderosas, above an understory of manzanita with round fleshy leaves and dark-red bark. The auriferous gravels were russet, and were full of cobbles the size of tomatoes—large stones of long transport by a most impressive river.

To the south, across the highway, the scene dropped off into a deep mountain valley. The near end of the valley was three hundred feet below the trees above us. The far end of the valley was nearly twice as deep. A mile wide, this was a valley that had not been a valley when wagons first crossed the Sierra. All of it had been water-dug by high-pressure hoses. It was man-made landscape on a Biblical scale. The stand of ponderosas at the northern rim was on the level of original ground.

The interstate was on a bench more than halfway up the gravel. Above us, behind the trees, were the tracks of the Southern Pacific. In the eighteen-sixties, when the railroad (then known as the Central Pacific) was about to work its way eastward across the mountains, it secured the rights to this ground before the nozzles reached it. Moores and I made our way up to the tracks, where the view to the north was over a hosed-out valley nearly as large as the one to the south, and bordered by white hydraulic cliffs. The railroad, with the interstate clinging to its hip, ran across a septum of the old terrain, an isthmus in the excavation, an unmined causeway hundreds of feet high made of gravel and gold.

This was the country of Iowa Hill, Lowell Hill, Poverty Hill, Poker Flat, Dutch Flat, Red Dog, You Bet, Yankee Jim's, Gouge Eye, Michigan Bluff, and Humbug City. It was the country of five hundred camps that sprang up for many dozens of miles to the north and south of the present route of I-80. For a year or two, it had been a center of world news, and for some decades had clanged with industry. Now, in the dry air, nothing was stirring, not even a transcontinental freight. But looking down the two sides into the artificial valleys you could almost hear the waterjets and the caving slide of gravel. Poverty Hill yielded four million dollars' worth of gold. You Bet yielded three. Humbug City got its name from a lack of confidence in the claims there, but when five million dollars came out of forty million cubic yards of flushed-away ground the name was changed to North Bloomfield. The water-dug valleys below the ground where we stood had yielded six million dollars in gold.

Yankee Jim was an Australian. A red-dog bank was a savings-and-loan ahead of its time. It issued notes in excess of its ability to redeem them. Across most of the Sierra, Interstate 80 runs close by the line of two counties—Placer and Nevada—which together produced five hundred and sixty million dollars in gold. Translated into modern values, that would be five billion. Yankee Jim was hanged in his eponymous town.

The ancient riverbed beneath us evidently passed through Gold Run, picked up a fossil tributary coming in through Dutch Flat, and went off to the northwest via Red Dog and You Bet. Before human beings appeared on earth, glacial ice and modern streams and other geologic agents had obliterated large parts of the Eocene river system. People had come near eliminating the rest. "Man is a geologic agent," Moores said, with a glance that swept the centennial valleys. Erosion occurs, for the most part, in what geologists call catastrophic events—hurricanes, rockslides, raging floods—and in that category full credentials belonged to hydraulic mining,

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for scouring out and taking away thirteen thousand million cubic yards of the Sierra.

I remember Moores rapping his geologic hammer on an outcrop of olivine in northern Greece. He was drawn to the rock for academic reasons, but he remarked that it might be gone before long, because of its use in a brick that is resistant to very high temperatures. I asked him how he felt about being in a profession that calls attention to the olivine that people tear up mountainsides to take away. He said, "Schizophrenic. I grew up in a mining family, a mining town, and when I got out of there I had had it with mining. Now I am a member of the Sierra Club. But you have to face the fact that if you are going to have an industrial society you must have places that will look terrible. Other places you set aside—to say, 'This is the way it was.'"

I remember him referring to the same disease in response to my asking him, one day in Davis, what effect his professionally developed sense of geologic time had had upon him. He said, "It makes you schizophrenic. The two time scales—the one human and emotional, the other geologic—are so disparate. But a sense of geologic time is the most important thing to get across to the non-geologist: the slow rate of geologic processes—centimetres per year—with huge effects if continued for enough years. A million years is a small number on the geologic time scale, while human experience is truly fleeting—all human experience, from its beginning, not just one lifetime. Only occasionally do the two time scales coincide."

When they do, the effects can be as lasting as they are pronounced. The human and the geologic time scales intersect each time an earthquake is felt by people. They intersect when mining, of any kind, begins. After 1848, when the two time scales intersected in the gold zone of the western Sierra, California was populated so rapidly that it became a state without ever being a territory. As the attraction diminished, newcomers ricocheted eastward, in sunburst pattern—to Idaho, to Arizona, to Nevada, New Mexico, Montana, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado—finding zinc, lead, copper, silver, and gold, and transmogrifying the West in a manner more pervasive than the storied transition from bison to cattle. The event of 1848 in California led directly to the discovery of gold in Australia (after an Australian miner who rushed to the Sierra saw auriferous facsimiles of New South Wales). By 1865, at the end of the American Civil War, seven hundred and eighty-five million dollars had come out of the ground in California, making a difference—possibly *the* difference—in the Civil War. The early Californian John Bidwell, an emigrant of 1841, expressed this in his memoirs:

> It is a question whether the United States could have stood the shock of the great rebellion of 1861 had the California gold discovery not been made. Bankers and business men of New York in 1864 did not hesitate to admit that but for the gold of California, which monthly poured its five or six millions into that financial center, the bottom would have dropped out of everything. These timely arrivals so strengthened the nerves of trade and stimulated business as to enable the government to sell its bonds at a time when its credit was its life-blood and the main reliance by which to feed, clothe, and maintain its armies. Once our bonds went down to thirty-eight cents on the dollar. California gold averted a total collapse and enabled a preserved Union to come forth from the great conflict.

Moores and I returned to the shoulder of the interstate and walked along the auriferous escarpment. The stream-rounded gravels, asparkle with quartz, are so compactly assembled there that they suggest the pebbly surface of a wide-wide screen. One does not need a director, a film, or rear projection to look into the bright stones and see the miners in motion: the four thousand who are in the region by the end of '48, the hundred and fifty thousand who follow in the years to 1884. With the obvious exception of the natives, no one is as sharply stricken by the convergences of time as Johann Augustus Sutter. He has come into a scene in which gold is unsuspected—this blue-eyed, blond and ruddy, bankrupt Swiss drygoods merchant, with his broad-brimmed hat and his broader belly and his exceptionally creative dream. He is thirty-six years old. He envisions a wilderness fiefdom—less than a kingdom but more than a colony—with himself as a kind of duke. On a ship called Clementine, he arrives in Monterey in 1839, accompanied by ten Hawaiians and an Indian boy once owned by Kit Carson and sold to Sutter for a hundred dollars. The Mexican government, which seeks some sort of buffer between coastal California and the encroaching United States, grants

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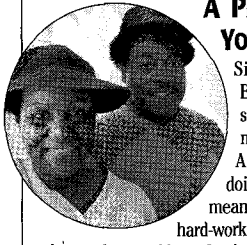
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him, on an incremental schedule, a hundred thousand acres of land. Sailing around San Francisco Bay, he spends a week hunting for the mouth of the Sacramento River. Soon after he finds it, there is a collection of Hawaiian grass huts on what is now Twenty-seventh Street, in a section of downtown Sacramento still called New Helvetia. He has cannons. He builds a fort, with walls three feet thick. He does not overlook a dungeon. A roof slopes in above peripheral chambers to frame a parade ground of two acres. Sutter's goal is to develop an independent agricultural economy, and he prospers. He has a gristmill. He brings in cattle and builds a tannery. He hires weavers and makes textiles. He widens his fields of grain, and draws plans for a second gristmill. He attracts many people. He issues passports.

One of the attracted people is James Wilson Marshall, of Lambertville, New Jersey, a mechanic-carpenter-wheelwright-coachmaker who is experienced as a sawyer. Sutter sees possibilities in cutting lumber and floating it to San Francisco. Meanwhile, he needs boards for the new gristmill. He sends Marshall up the American River to a small valley framed in canyons and backed by a mountainside of sugar pines. Like many handsome moments in Western scenery, this one is prized by the natives, who think it is theirs. A bend in the river touches the mountains. Marshall lays a millrace across the bend.

He sees "blossom" in the stream gravel and remarks that he suspects the presence of metal.

A sawyer asks him, "What do you mean by 'blossom'?"

Marshall says, "Quartz."

As the sawmill nears completion, its wheel is too low. Water is ponding around it. The best correction is to deepen the tailrace down through the gravel to bedrock. Yalesumni tribesmen help dig out the tailrace, where, early in the morning of January 24, 1848, Marshall picks up small light chips that may not be stone.

Having some general knowledge of minerals, I could not call to mind more than two which in any way resembled this—*sulphuret of iron*, very bright and brittle; and *gold*, bright, yet malleable; I then tried it between two rocks, and found that it could be beaten into a different shape, but not broken.

He sets it on glowing coals, and he boils it in lye. The substance shows no change.

Carrying a folded cloth containing flakes the size of lentils, Marshall journeys to New Helvetia, and insists that he and Sutter talk behind a locked door. Sutter pours aquafortis on the flakes. They are unaffected. Sutter gets out his Encyclopedia Americana and looks under G. Using an apothecary's scales, he and Marshall are soon balancing the flakes with an equal weight of silver. Now they lower the scales into water. If the flakes are gold, their specific gravity will exceed the specific gravity of the silver. Underwater, the scales tip, and Marshall's flakes go down.

Sutter at once can see the future and is dismayed by the look of it. Who will work in his sawmill if gold lies in the stream beside it? Who will complete the gristmill? What will become of his New Helvetia, his field-and-forest canton, his discrete world, his agrarian dream? He and Marshall agree to urge others to keep the discovery a local if not total secret until the mills are finished.

Coincidentally in Mexico (that is, only five days after Marshall's visit to Sutter), Nicholas P. Trist, American special agent, who has defied orders recalling him to Washington and pressed on with negotiations, successfully concludes the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. For fifteen million dollars, Mexico, defeated in battle, turns over to the United States three hundred and thirty-four million acres of land, including California.

Sutter writes a twenty-year lease with the Yalesumni for the land around the sawmill. He agrees to grind their grain for them and to pay them, in clothing and tools, a hundred and fifty dollars a year. Seeking a validation of the lease, Sutter sends an envoy to Monterey—to Colonel Richard Mason, USA, military governor of California. The envoy sets on a table a number of yellow samples. Mason calls in Lieutenant William Sherman, West Point '40, his acting assistant adjutant general.

Mason: "What is that?"

Sherman: "Is it gold?"

Mason: "Have you ever seen native gold?"

Sherman: "In Georgia."

Sherman bites a sample. Then he asks a soldier to bring him an axe and a hatchet. With these he beats on another sample until—malleable, unbreakable—it is airy and thin. Sherman

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learned these tests in 1844, when he was twenty-four, on an investigative assignment in Georgia having to do with a military crime.

Mason sends a message to Sutter to the effect that the Indians, having no rights to the land, therefore have no right to lease it.

In an April memorandum, the editor of the California *Star* says, in large letters, "HUMBUG" to the idea that gold in any quantity lies in the Sierra. Six weeks later, the *Star* ceases publication, because there is no one left in the shop to print it. Thousands come through Sutter's Mill and spread into the country. On the American River at the discovery site, Marshall tries to charge tithes, but the forty-eighters ignore him and overrun his claims. They stand hip to hip like trout fishermen, crowding the stream. Like fishermen, too, they move on, restlessly, from cavern to canyon to flat to ravine, always imagining something big lying in the next pool. Indians using willow baskets wash sixteen thousand dollars. People are finding nuggets the size of eggs. "There is a chance now for every white man now in the country to make a fortune," says a letter written to the New York *Herald* on May 27, 1848. One white man, in some likelihood Scottish, is driven insane by the gold he finds, and wanders around shouting all day, "I am rich! I am rich!" Two miners in seven days take seventeen thousand dollars from a small gully.

In June, Colonel Mason travels from Monterey to San Francisco and on to New Helvetia to see for himself what is happening in the foothills. He takes Sherman with him. They find San Francisco "almost deserted," its harbors full of abandoned ships. Ministers have abandoned their churches, teachers their students, lawyers their victims. Shops are closed. Jobs of all kinds have been left unfinished. As Mason and Sherman cross the Coast Ranges and the Great Central Valley, they see gristmills and sawmills standing idle, loose livestock grazing in fields of ripe untended grain, "houses vacant, and farms going to waste." It is as if a devastating army had traversed a wide swath on its way to the foothills from the sea.

Sutter, in the shadow of his broad-brimmed hat—his silver-headed cane tucked under his arm—warmly greets the military officers. It is scarcely their

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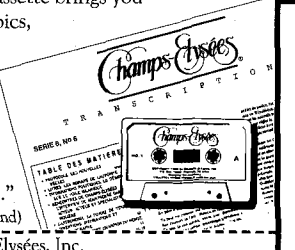

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fault that two thousand hides are rotting in the vats of his abandoned tannery, that forty thousand bushels of standing wheat are disintegrating on the stem, that work has ceased on the half-finished gristmill, that the weavers have abandoned their looms, that strangers without passports—here today, gone tomorrow—have turned his fort into a boarding house and taken his horses and killed his cattle. To short-term profit but long-term disaster his canton is doomed. His dream is drifting away like so much yellow smoke. We could follow him to his destitute farm on the Feather River and on to the East, where he dies insolvent in 1880, but better to leave him on July 4, 1848, sitting at the head of his table in the storehouse of his fort, host of a party he is giving to celebrate—for the first time in California—the independence of the United States. He has fifty guests. With toasts, entertainment, oratory, beef, fowl, champagne, Sauternes, sherry, Madeira, and brandy, he presents a dinner that costs him the equivalent of sixty thousand dollars (in the foothills' suddenly inflated prices converted into modern figures). In no way has he shown resentment that rejection has met his appeal to secure his claims in a discovery of sufficient magnitude to pay for a civil war. Seated on his right is Richard Barnes Mason. Seated on his left is William Tecumseh Sherman.

By the end of 1848, a few thousand people, spread out over a hundred and fifty miles, have removed from modern stream placers ten million dollars in gold. The forty-eighters have the best of it in 1849, because the forty-niners are travelling most of that season, at the end of which fifty thousand miners are in the country. There are a hundred and twenty thousand by the end of 1855. The lone miner all but disappears. To stay abreast of the sophisticating technologies, individuals necessarily form groups. Groups are crowded out by corporations. More and more miners make less and less money, until many independents are living hand-to-mouth and their way of life is called subsistence mining. Watching companions die of disease in Central American jungles or drown in Cape storms, they have travelled thousands of miles in pursuit of a golden goal that has now turned into "mining for beans." Always, though, there are fresh stories going east—stories that would cause almost anyone to start thinking about trying the overland route, the isthmus, the Horn.

Growlersburg is so named because of the sound of nuggets swirling in pans.

In a deep remote canyon on the east branch of the north fork of the Feather River, two Germans roll a boulder aside and under it find lump gold. Another couple of arriving miners wash four hundred ounces there in eight hours. A single pan yields fifteen hundred dollars. The ground is so rich that claims are limited to forty-eight inches square. In one week, the population grows from two to five hundred. The place is named Rich Bar.

At Goodyears Bar, on the Yuba, one wheelbarrow-load of placer is worth two thousand dollars.

From hard rock above Carson Creek comes a single piece of gold weighing a hundred and twelve pounds. After black powder is packed in a nearby crack, the blast throws out a hundred and ten thousand dollars in gold.

A miner is buried in Rough and Ready. As shovels move, gold appears in his grave. Services continue while mourners stake claims. So goes the story, dust to dust.

From the auriferous gravels of Iowa Hill two men remove thirty thousand dollars in a single day.

A nugget weighing only a little less than Leland Stanford comes out of hard rock in Carson Hill. Size of a shoebox and nearly pure gold, it weighs just under two hundred pounds (troy)—the largest piece ever found in California. Carson Hill, in Calaveras County, is in the belt of the Mother Lode—an elongate swarm of gold-bearing quartz veins, running north-south for a hundred and fifty miles at about a thousand feet of altitude. There are Mother Lode quartz veins as much as fifty metres wide.

Some of the early gold camps are so deep in ravines, gulches, caverns, and canyons that the light of the winter sun never reaches the miners' tents. If you have no tent, you live in a hole in the ground. Your backpack includes a blanket roll, a pick, a shovel, a gold pan, maybe a small rocker in which to sift gravel, a coffeepot, a tobacco tin, saleratus bread, dried apples, and salt pork. You sleep beside your fire. When you get up, you "shake yourself and you are dressed." You wear a flannel shirt, probably red. You wear wool trousers, heavy leather boots, and a soft hat with a wide and flexible brim. You carry a pistol. Not everyone resembles you. There are miners in top hats, miners in panama hats, miners in sombreros, and French miners in berets, who have raised the tricolor over their claims. Chinese miners wear outsize boots and blue cotton. Their packs are light. They live on rice and dried fish. Their brothels thrive. They are the greatest gamblers in the Sierra. They make Caucasian gambling look like penny ante. There are miners working in formal topcoats. There are miners in fringed buckskin, miners in brocaded vests, miners working claims in dress pumps (because their boots have worn out). There are numerous Indians, who are essentially naked. There are many black miners, all of them free. As individual prospecting gives way to gang labor, this could be a place for slaves, but in the nascent State of California slavery is forbidden. On Sundays, while you drink your tanglefoot whiskey, you can watch a dog kill a dog, a chicken kill a chicken, a man kill a man, a bull kill a bear. You can watch Shakespeare. You can visit a "public woman." The *Hydraulic Press* for October 30, 1858, says, "Nowhere do young men look so old as in California." They build white wooden churches with steeples.

In four months in Mokelumne Hill, there is a murder every week. In the absence of law, lynching is common. The camp that will be named Placerville is earlier called Hangtown. When a mob forgets to tie the hands of a condemned man and he clutches the rope above him, someone beats his hands with a pistol until he lets go. A Chinese miner wounds a white youth and is jailed. With a proffered gift of tobacco, lynchers lure the "Chinee" to his cell window, grab his head, slip a rope around his neck, and pull until he is dead. A young miner in Bear River kills an older man. A tribunal offers him death or banishment. He selects death, explaining that he is from Kentucky. In Kentucky, that would be the honorable thing to do.

Some miners' wives take in washing and make more money than their husbands do. In every gold rush from this one to the Klondike, the suppliers and service industries will gather up the dust while ninety-nine per cent of

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the miners go home with empty pokes. In 1853, Leland Stanford, twenty-nine years old, opens a general store in Michigan Bluff, about ten miles from Gold Run. John Studebaker makes wheelbarrows in Hangtown.

Stanford moves to Sacramento, where he sells "provisions, groceries, wines, liquors, cigars, oils & camphene, flour, grain & produce, mining implements, miners' supplies." Credit is not in Stanford's vocabulary. Miners must "come down with the dust." They come down with the dust to Mark Hopkins, a greengrocer who, sensing greater profit in picks, shovels, and pans, goes out of produce and into partnership at Collis P. Huntington, Hardware. They come down with the dust to Charles Crocker, Mining Supplies. When the engineer Theodore Judah comes down from a reconnaissance of the Sierra with the opinion that a railroad can be built across the mountains, these merchants of Sacramento have the imagination to believe him, and they form a corporation to construct the Central Pacific. The geologic time scale, rising out of the ground in the form of Cretaceous gold, has virtually conjured a transcontinental railroad.

It leaves Sacramento in 1863, and not a minute too soon, for in a sense—which is only a little fictive—it is racing the technology of mining. As the railroad advances toward Donner Summit at the rate of about twenty miles a year, the miners are doing what they can to remove the intervening landscape. Their ability to do so has been much accelerated in scarcely a dozen years. This is the evolution of technique:

Prospectors find the fossil rivers within two years of James Wilson Marshall's discovery, and soon afterward vast acreages are full of holes that seem to have been made by very large coyotes. In the early form of mining that becomes known as coyoting, you dig a deep hole through the overburden and lower yourself into it with a windlass. You hope that your mine will not become your grave. You dig through the gravel to bedrock, then drift to the side. Some coyote shafts go down a hundred feet. One goes down six hundred. When water first arrives by ditch and flume, it not only washes excavated pay dirt but is allowed to spill downslope, gullying the gravel mountainsides and washing out resident gold. This is known as ground-sluicing, gouging, booming, or "picking down the bank."

So far, the technology is not new. From high reservoirs and dug canals, the Romans ground-sluiced for gold, as did Colombian Indians before 1500, and people in the eighteenth century in the region known as the Brazils. California's momentous innovation in placer mining comes in 1853, after Edward E. Matteson, a ground-sluicer, is nearly killed when saturated ground slides down upon him and knocks his pick from his hand. Matteson thinks of a way to dismantle a slope from a safe distance. With his colleagues Eli Miller and A. Chabot, he attaches a sheet-brass nozzle to a rawhide hose and bombards a hill near Red Dog with a shaped hydraulic charge. That first nozzle is only three feet long and its jet at origin three-quarters of an inch in diameter. Soon the nozzles are sixteen feet long, and are called dictators, monitors, or giants. They require ever more ditches and flumes. In the words of *Hutchings' California Magazine*, "The time may come when the whole of the water from our mountain streams will be needed for mining and manufacturing purposes, and will be sold at a price within the reach of all." Where two men working a rocker can wash a cubic yard a day, two men working a mountainside with a dictator can bring down and drive through a sluice box fifteen hundred tons in twelve hours, and this is the technology that the railroad is racing to the ground at Gold Run.

Although the nozzle has the appearance of a naval cannon, it is mounted on a ball socket and is so delicately counterbalanced with a "jockey box" full of small boulders that, for all its power, it can be controlled with one hand. Every vestige of what has lain before it—forest, soil, gravel—is driven asunder, washed over, piled high, and flushed away. At a hundred and twenty-five pounds of pressure per square inch, the column of shooting water seems to subdivide into braided pulses hypnotic to the eye, and where it crashes at the end of its parabola it sounds like a storm sea hammering a beach. In one year, the North Bloomfield Gravel Company uses fifteen thousand million gallons of water. Through the big nine-inch nozzles go thirty thousand gallons a minute. Benjamin Silliman, Jr., a

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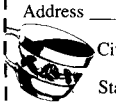

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founding professor of the Sheffield Scientific School, at Yale, writes in 1865, "Man has, in the hydraulic process, taken command of nature's agencies, employing them for his own benefit, compelling her to surrender the treasure locked up in the auriferous gravel by the use of the same forces which she employed in distributing it!"

To get at the deepest richest gravels, which lie in the hollows of bedrock channels, the miners dig tunnels under the beds of the fossil rivers. When they reach a point directly below the blue lead, they go straight up into the auriferous gravel, where they set up their nozzles and flush out the mountain from the inside. At Port Wine Ridge, Chinese miners make a tunnel in the gravel fifteen miles long. Surface excavations meanwhile deepen. Twelve million cubic yards of gravel are washed out of Scotts Flat, forty-seven million cubic yards of gravel out of You Bet and Red Dog, a hundred and five million cubic yards out of Dutch Flat, a hundred and twenty-eight million out of Gold Run. After a visit to Gold Run and Dutch Flat in 1868, W. A. Skidmore, of San Francisco, writes, "We will soon have deserted towns and a waste of country torn up by hydraulic washings, far more cheerless in appearance than the primitive wilderness of 1848." In the middle eighteen-sixties, hydraulic miners find it profitable to get thirty-four cents' worth of gold from a cubic yard of gravel. In a five-year period in the eighteen-seventies, the North Bloomfield Gravel Company washes down three and a quarter million yards to get $94,250. Soon the company is moving twelve million parts of gravel to get one part of gold.

As the mine tailings travel in floods, they thicken streambeds and fill valleys with hundreds of feet of gravel. In their blanched whiteness, spread wide, these gravels will appear to be lithic glaciers for a length of time on the human scale that might as well be forever. In a year and a half, hydraulic mining washes enough material into the Yuba River to fill the Erie Canal. By 1878 along the Yuba alone, eighteen thousand acres of farmland are covered. Mud, sand, cobbles—Yuba tailings and Feather River tailings spew ten miles into the Great Central Valley. Tailings of the American River reach farther than that. Broad moonscapes of unvegetated stream-rounded rubble conceal the original land. Before hydraulic mining, the normal elevation of the Sacramento River in the Great Valley was sea level. As more and more hydraulic detritus comes out of the mountains, the normal elevation of the river rises seven feet. In 1880, hydraulic mining puts forty-six million cubic yards into the Sacramento and the San Joaquin. The muds keep going toward San Francisco, where, ultimately, eleven hundred and forty-six million cubic yards are added to the bays. Navigation is impaired above Carquinez Strait. The ocean is brown at the Golden Gate.

In the early eighteen-eighties, a citizens' group called the Anti-Debris Association is formed to combat the hydraulic miners. On June 18, 1883, a dam built by the miners fails high in the mountains—apparently because it was insufficiently engineered to withstand the pressure of high explosives. Six hundred and fifty million cubic feet of water suddenly go down the Yuba, killing six people and creating a wasteland much like the miners'. On January 9, 1884, a United States Circuit Court bans the flushing of debris into streams and rivers. Although the future holds some hydraulic mining—with debris dams, catch basins, and the like—it is essentially over, and miners in California from this point forward will be delving into hard rock.

Edward E. Matteson—of whom the Nevada City *Transcript* said in 1860, "His labors, like the magic of Aladdin's lamp, have broken into the innermost caves of the gnomes, snatched their imprisoned treasures, and poured them, in golden showers, into the lap of civilized humanity"—spends the last days of his life at Gold Flat, near Nevada City, working as a nighttime mine watchman and a daytime bookseller. Even in the high years of his invention, he never applied for a patent. From 1848 onward, James Wilson Marshall has been literally haunted by the fact of his being the discoverer of California gold. William Tecumseh Sherman will remember him as "a half-crazy man at best," an impression that Marshall confirms across the years as he claims to consult with spirits, asking them where he might again find gold. Newcomers to California in mid-century believe that Marshall really

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does have some sort of divine intuition, and—to his bitter annoyance—follow him wherever he goes. With respect to further gold strikes, nowhere is where he goes. Drinking himself to Heaven, he drips tobacco juice through his beard. It stains his shirt and dungarees. Looking so, he makes a visit home. From his family's house, on Bridge Street in Lambertville, he goes up into the country toward Marshall's Corner and the farmhouse where he was born, prospecting outcrops of New Jersey diabase, hoping to discover gold. He picks up rock samples. He carries them to a sister's house and roasts them in the oven.

At the end of the twentieth century, the small farmhouse where he was born is still standing. Part fieldstone, part frame, it has long since been divided into three apartments, enveloped in a parklike shopping center called Pennytown. A boldly lettered sign on a screen door indirectly recalls Marshall's compact with Sutter. It says, "Don't Let the Cat Out."

BESIDE I-80, Moores inserted a knife in the auriferous gravels and pried loose a few rounded stones. He carved them to demonstrate their softness, and said, "They are practically clay. They have weathered so much they could be in Georgia."

In the nineteenth century, some of the nuggets found in the auriferous gravels were electrum—a natural pale-yellow alloy of gold and silver. Other nuggets were full of mothy cavities, where something had been eaten away—quite possibly silver. This was some of the first evidence that California enjoyed a coincidence of golds, for electrum was not characteristic of the hard-rock gold of the Sierra. The gravels had brought those nuggets from somewhere else. Rock soft enough to carve with a knife would disintegrate if it were tumbling in the bed of a stream; therefore, it had softened after it arrived. Because gold changes shape so easily, the mothy pitting of nuggets necessarily occurred after transport, too.

That the auriferous deposits were Eocene was affirmed by the fossil plants among them. The gravels themselves, with channel deposits six hundred feet deep and stones the size of basketballs, described the power of the river that brought them, the Himalayan loft of its headwaters. Fossils of subalpine Eocene vegetation have since been found in central Nevada.

"There is gold in the Carson Range, east of the Sierra, that is like the nuggets that were found in these gravels," Moores said. "The source of some California gold is probably under Nevada now."

If something as crazy-sounding as that had been said to miners in the eighteen-fifties, the miners in all likelihood would not have been surprised, for they were familiar with geologists, and geologists were not their heroes. In 1852, at Indian Bar, a miner remarked to a doctor's wife, "I maintain that science is the blindest guide that one could have on a gold-finding expedition. Those men, who judge by the appearance of the soil, and depend upon geological calculations, are invariably disappointed, while the ignorant adventurer, who digs just for the sake of digging, is almost sure to be successful." The doctor's wife, Louisa Amelia Knapp Smith Clappe, is probably the most interesting writer who was on the scene in the early days of the gold rush. Indian Bar was close by Rich Bar, where the two Germans in the deep canyon rolled a boulder and found lump gold. The doctor and his wife became resident there in 1851. She wrote letters to a sister in Amherst, Massachusetts, which have been preserved in publication under her pseudonym, Dame Shirley. At times, she may be even more purple than the interior of the Rich Bar saloon, but when she speaks of "the make-shift ways which some people fancy essential to California life," she is hitting for distance. She speaks of "red-shirted miners . . . reclining gracefully . . . in that transcendental state of intoxication, when a man is compelled to hold on to the earth for fear of falling off." She speaks of "the Irishman's famous down couch, which consisted of a single feather laid upon a rock." And she has thoughts to add about geologists:

> Wherever Geology has said that gold *must* be, there, perversely enough, it lies not; and wherever [geology] has declared that it could *not* be, there has it oftenest garnered up in miraculous profusion the yellow splendor of its virgin beauty. It is certainly very painful to a well-regulated mind to see the irreverent contempt, shown by this beautiful mineral, to the dictates of science; but what better can one expect from the "root of all evil"?

There were prospectors in the Sierra who wore over their hearts a device they called a gold magnet,

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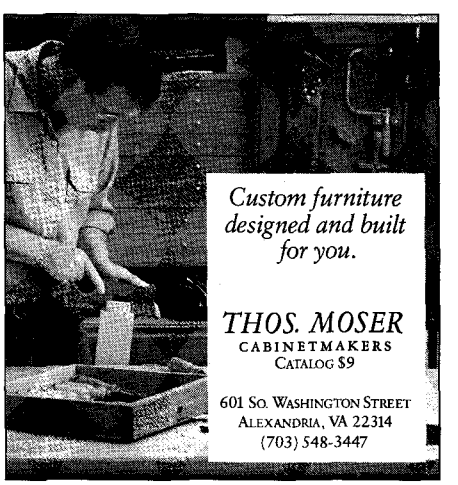
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explaining that in the presence of gold the magnet tingled and shocked. There were prospectors who carried forked hazelwood rods that were said to point to gold as if it were water. The miners had as much respect for them as they had for the geologists. Over their shoulders as they took off up the canyons the miners liked to say, "Gold is where you find it." As early as 1849, the Sacramento *Placer Times* remarked:

> The mines of California have baffled all science, and rendered the application of philosophy entirely nugatory. Bone and sinew philosophy, with a sprinkling of good luck, can alone render success certain. We have met with many geologists and practical scientific men in the mines, and have invariably seen them beaten by unskilled men, soldiers and sailors, and the like.

All that notwithstanding, the legislature of the new State of California created in 1860 a state geological survey, and recruited the Yale-trained and already distinguished Josiah D. Whitney to be the state geologist. Nearly everybody imagined that Whitney would investigate and catalogue places in California where the earth could be turned for a profit. Instead, he gave them paleontology, historical geology, igneous petrology, stratigraphy, structure, tectonics. He gave them the minutest points of mineralogy, and he gave them the global setting. He gave them academic geology in the form that can least be turned into capital—the disciplines that lead to understanding of the history and composition of the planet. California fired him. They fired him in the modern sense that after a few years he was defunded. His name rests on the highest mountain in the Sierra Nevada.

By the erosive scenes at Iowa Hill, Poverty Hill, Forest Hill, North Bloomfield, Michigan Bluff, Gold Run, You Bet, Dutch Flat, Poker Flat, Downieville, and Smartville—the major Eocene-river deposits—Josiah Whitney was not appalled. He liked the hydraulic diggings. They flushed away the soft stuff and exposed solid rock, the better for geologists to see.

Moores cast a final glance over the man-made valley by Gold Run, and said, "It's not all that bad. Some places like this do not look bad. They are spaced out. They are not the English industrial Midlands. I like to drive cars. I like to move rapidly from place to place. There is a price we pay. If people wish to eschew all that, let them walk. When they get rid of their cars and their hi-fi sets, their credibility will rise."

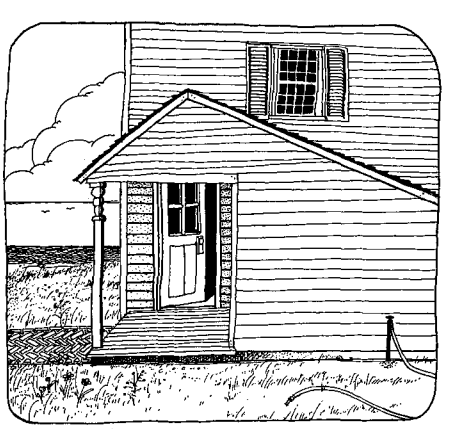
He lingered long enough for a change of mood. His voice resumed at a lower and softer register. "In a couple of hundred years we are doing a good job of extracting minerals deposited over billions of years. High-grade gold deposits are just gone. Ditto copper. The U.S. has had it. There just won't be any more until we go through a few million more years of erosion, allowing the geologic processes of secondary enrichment to take place. Meanwhile, technology must extract lower- and lower-grade resources. We don't realize what we're doing."

I said I thought that we knew what we were doing and didn't give a damn.

He said, "Americans look upon water as an inexhaustible resource. It's not, if you're mining it. Arizona is mining groundwater."

Soon we were dropping toward two thousand feet, among deeply weathered walls of phyllite, in color cherry and claret—the preserved soils of the subtropics when the unrisen mountains were a coastal plain. Geologists call it lateritic soil, in homage to the Latin word for brick. All around the Sierra, between two and three thousand feet of altitude, is a band of red soil, its color deepened by rainfall that leaches out competing colors and intensifies the iron oxide. Not only phyllites but also mica schists, shales, tuffs, and sandstones in the roadcuts were red. When the road dipped far below the rooflike plane of the western Sierra Nevada, the dissected inclines around us had the appearance of red mountains covered with manzanita.

At Weimar, a little off the highway and close to the two-thousand-foot contour, was a narrow band of serpentine, the California state rock. Moores said, "Worldwide, there is an association between serpentine and gold-bearing quartz, as there is here, in the belt of the Mother Lode. Gold-quartz deposits and serpentines just go together. Where there's a hard-rock mine, serpentine will not be far away. The relationship between serpentine and quartz-vein gold is not well understood, but the miners talked about it. It was a fact of their life." On the geologic map, the serpentines showed up as strings and pods in a rich wisteria blue, like some sort of paisley print, trending north-south, signing the Mother Lode.



Also accompanying the Mother Lode was a family of major faults, confined to a zone that was scarcely fifteen miles wide but extended, both to the north and to the south of Interstate 80, more than a hundred miles. Three of the faults crossed the highway in and close to Auburn, about twenty miles below Gold Run and thirty-five above Sacramento. In Auburn Ravine, a couple of hundred yards below the railroad overpass and exactly twelve hundred feet above sea level, the interstate had been cut through charcoal-gray rock that had very evidently been damaged by a great deal more than human engineering. We pulled over as soon as the shoulder was wide enough, and walked back to have a look. We walked past talc schists and sheared serpentines and integral blocks of volcanic rock separated by shear zones. The cut that had caught Moores' attention was ten feet high and nondescript, below gray pines and trees of heaven. It was tight to the interstate, and tandem trailers were screaming past us. A billboard across the road said, "Placer Savings, It's the Extras That Count." Picking and prying at the Sierra Nevada a roadcut at a time, Moores had crossed the mountains showing all levels of absorption and excitement. In the presence of unusual rock, he variously fizzes and clicks. Now, as he leaned into this outcrop with his lens, he began to do both.

It was fine-grained diabase, in magnification asparkle with crystals—free-form, asymmetrical, improvisational plagioclase crystals bestrewn against a field of dark pyroxene. It was a much finer diabase than you would find in, say, the Palisades Sill, across the Hudson River from Manhattan. It had cooled and frozen more rapidly,

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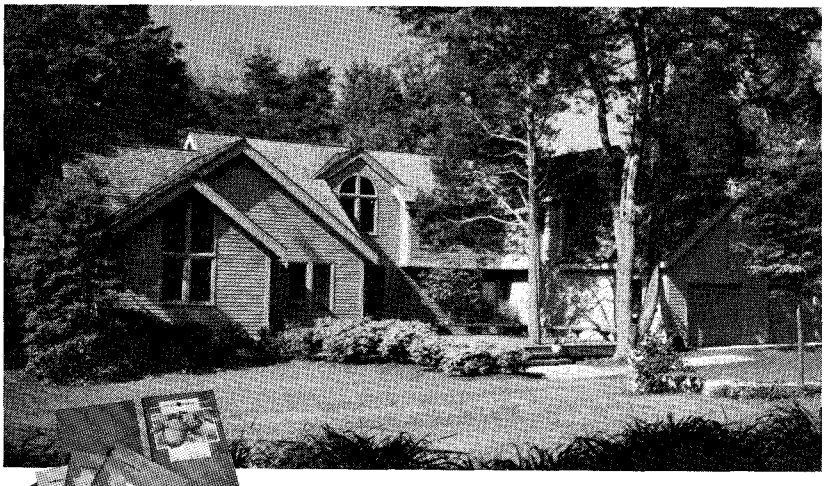

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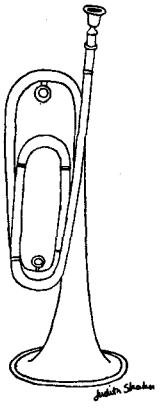
but it derived from a chemically identical magma—that is to say, *essentially* identical, there being no exact copy in geology except a Xerox of your last mistake. Had this magma been extruded into air or water it would have become basalt, but—like granite, diorite, gabbro—it had chilled and formed its crystals in the absence of both. There was a signal difference, however—far beyond cooling rates or chemical composition—between this diabase and the rock of the Palisades Sill or any magma that intrudes and then hardens as a single body. To see the difference, you did not need to make a thin section—a tiny slice of rock for a microscope slide. You did not even need the hand lens. This rock had been assembled in vertical laminations like successive layers of wallboard. It had frozen not all in one piece but in continual fashion, layer after layer—a history that could be read from one lamination to the next, like bar codes indefinitely extended. Moores, ebullient, said, "We're in Fat City." Lens to eye and leaning into the outcrop, this professed and practicing agnostic said, "God, it's fantastic! God Almighty! This is a jackpot, a tremendous bit of serendipity. We've struck gold."



Given the fact that we were at twelve hundred feet in the western foothills of the Sierra Nevada and in close proximity to serpentine and quartz, I could be forgiven if at first I took him literally. Yet all that glistered in this outcrop was pyroxene. Gold is where you find it, though, and for Eldridge Moores this indeed was gold. Unlike all the other rock we had seen as we traversed the mountains, or were likely to see in most of the aerial world, this rock in its origin was not of any continent. It was not from slope, not from shelf, not from lake, stream, or land. It had no genetic relationship to continental rock. Like a blue-water fish on a farmhouse platter, it had been moved a great distance. Only a meteorite could have been more out of place.

Nineteenth-century geologists would have called this rock augite porphyrite; the miners would have called it blue diorite or slate. It was rock of the ocean crust. Formed at spreading centers, ocean crust gradually turns cold as it travels away from the hot rift of its beginnings toward the deep trenches where nearly a hundred per cent of it is consumed. Down the vertical column from salt water to mantle rock, ocean crust has varying components, of which these laminations are the clearest record of lateral movement. A layer at a time, the fluid rock is driven upward in the spreading center, solidifies, and takes its place in the long march. Most of this happens in the mid-oceans, in the world system of separating boundaries of plates. It also happens in the short, isolated, and slice-like spreading centers that develop near island arcs. In all geology where rock forms in successive layers, the layers are initially horizontal—with this one exception. The laminations of the ocean crust form vertically, and remain vertical as they move to become the floors of abyssal plains and until they disappear into trenches. In Moores' words, "This is the only situation where age progression goes sideways."

Although the rock in this outcrop had obviously been shattered by a very great tectonic force—and although it had to some extent been recrystallized as well in the attendant heat and pressure—neither its disfigurement nor its metamorphosis had masked its structure. The laminations—known in geology as sheeted dikes—were as narrow as ten centimetres and as wide as eighty. By looking closely at their edges, you could all but see the spreading center that the accumulating rock had slowly moved away from. Layer after layer was glassy along its right-hand edge. The magma had cooled quickly there after touching solidified rock. The spreading center, therefore, had been to the left. After a new lamination of magma touched hard rock and turned marginally to glass, the rest of the lamination froze more slowly, forming the fine crystals. Some layers had glassy margins on both sides. They had split the weak center of previous and still-cooling layers. In a minor and local way, they corrupted the chronology.

When seismology first revealed the dimensions of the ocean crust, it proved to be surprisingly thin—about fifteen thousand feet thin—with remarkable uniformity all over the world. The sediments upon it, generally speaking, are not much more than a veneer.

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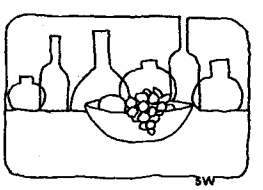
Rock of the ocean crust—departing from spreading centers with bilateral symmetry, ultimately disappearing in the subduction zones—is everywhere younger than most rock of the continents. The oldest known continental rock was discovered about halfway between Great Slave Lake and Great Bear Lake, in the Canadian Northwest Territories, in 1989, and has an argon-argon age of 3.96 billion years. The earth itself, according to radiometrics, is six hundred million years older than that. The oldest ocean-crustal rock that has yet been found in any seafloor in the world is early-middle Jurassic—a hundred and eighty-five million years old. That is less than one-twentieth the age of the oldest continental rock and one-twenty-fifth the age of the earth itself. From spreading to subduction, from creation to extinction, the ocean crust completely cleans house in fewer than two hundred million years. A lithospheric plate will typically include both continental rock and ocean crust, but trenches get rid of the ocean crust while the continents stay afloat. Since rock of the sort that Moores and I were looking at does not form on continents and will not be found under a Hudson Bay, a Sea of Okhotsk, or any epicontinental sea, what was it doing in Auburn, California, more than five hundred miles from the nearest abyssal floor?

Moores did not have to be asked, for if he had a tectonic and petrologic specialty this was it. He had travelled the earth to see this kind of rock. Where you found it up on dry land, it proclaimed an event in the making of new country, in the mobile history of plates. It was not a signature after a fact but a precursory signing in. In its transportation from the deep and its emplacement on a continent, it was not merely a clue but an absolute statement that scenery had been shifted in an operatic manner.



Toward the end of the middle Jurassic—in the high noon of dinosaurs, about a hundred and sixty-five million years ago—an island arc like the Aleutians or Japan had moved in from the western ocean and docked here. This was the third terrane at this latitude: the one that followed Sonomia and smashed into it with crumpling, mountain-building effects that propagated eastward turning soils into phyllites, sandstones into quartzites, siltstones into slates—the metamorphics we had seen up the road. In aggregate, the three terranes extended the continent by at least four hundred miles. The third one, suturing here, had doubled the width of what is now California.

The sheeted diabase that we found in Auburn—shattered so grossly in the collision—was a part of the ocean crust at the leading edge of the third terrane. As the island arc drifted eastward and the continent westward, nearly all the intervening ocean crust was consumed, but some broke off and came to rest on the continental margin, announcing the collision.

North-south, the third terrane probably came near to being a thousand miles long. What remains of it is closer to a hundred. Its width, including the part that is under the Great Valley, is about a hundred miles, too. This ten-thousand-square-mile piece of ground, named for a gold camp some twenty-five miles north of Auburn, is known in geology as the Smartville Block.

If you look at a map of the Mother Lode—its narrow band, north-south, lying under Grass Valley, Auburn, Angels Camp, French Gulch, Confidence, and Plymouth—you are, for practical purposes, looking at a map of the Smartville suture. As a geologically immediate result of the collision, the nearby rock developed the numerous high-angle faults that now appear on the geologic map along the Mother Lode. The voluminous magmas of the batholith came into the country. Water moving down through the faults would have circulated close to—or actually in—the magma. Gold, which loves itself and strongly resists combination with other elements, will go into compounds at very high temperatures. The gold that is among magmatic fluids (or in the adjacent country rock) may be combined, for example, with chlorine or sulphur. The gold compounds are "modestly" soluble, and will dissolve in the water, which picks up many other elements, too, including silicon. The hot solution rises into fissures in hard crust rock, where the cooling gold breaks away from the compounds and falls out of the water as metal. Silicon precipitates, too, filling up the fissures and envel-

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oping the gold with veins of silicon dioxide, which is quartz. In this manner, the Smartville Block, docking in the Jurassic, not only doubled the size of central California but created its Mother Lode.

If you could pull up an acre of abyssal plain anywhere in the world—lift into view a complete column of the ocean floor, from the accumulated sediments at the top to mantle rock at the base—you would find the sheeted dikes about halfway down. In contrast to the rock columns you find all over the continents—giddy with time gaps among lithologies of miscellaneous origin and age—this totem assemblage from the oceans tells a generally consistent story. At its low end is peridotite, the rock of the mantle, tectonically altered in several ways on departure from the spreading center. Above the mantle rock lie the cooled remains of the great magma chamber that released flowing red rock into the spreading center. The chamber, in cooling, tends to form strata, as developing crystals settle within it like snow—olivine, plagioclase, pyroxene snow—but above these cumulate bands it becomes essentially a massive gabbro shading upward into plagiogranite as the magmatic juices chemically differentiate themselves in ways that relate to temperature. Just above the granites are the sheeted dikes of diabase, which kept filling the rift between the diverging plates. Above the sheeted dikes, where the fluid rock actually entered the sea, the suddenly chilled extrusions are piled high, like logs outside a sawmill. Because these extrusions have convex ends that bulge smoothly and resemble pillows, they are known in geology as pillow lavas. Above the pillows are the various sediments that have drifted downward through the deep sea: umbers, ochres, cherts, chalk. Unlike the rest of the crust-and-mantle package, the sediments may hint at the surrounding world. Water that gets down through all this and into the mantle rock—at the spreading center or anywhere else—will change the nature and appearance of that rock. Through an alteration of minerals, the rock takes on a silky lustre and a very smooth texture, becomes fibrous, and develops color—occasional streaks and spots of white, but mainly chrome green, myrtle green, Nile green, in patterned shapes within the mantle black. Because the patterns strongly suggest the skin of a snake, this rock has been known—for nearly six hundred years in the English language—as serpentine. Geologists—in their strange, synecdochical way—have named the entire oceanic assemblage for this one component rock. But not directly. In their acute sense of time, they were not content to settle for a term of Latin derivation. Instead, they extracted from a deeper stratum ὄφις—*ophis*—the Greek word for snake. From the mantle upward, the complete column of ocean-floor rock is collectively known in geology as an ophiolite. The generally consistent differences within it are the ophiolitic sequence.

On the American River under the bluffs of Auburn, in 1852, a single pan of gravel might be worth a hundred dollars. In 1857, after the lone miners had worked the place over, the American River Ditch Company built a dam there, to impound water for hydraulic mining. The dam eventually crumbled. The dam site did not. As environmentalists have discovered to their eternal chagrin, a dam site is a dam site forever, no matter what the state or the nation may decide to do about it in any given era. On present road maps of California, that part of the American River is marked "Auburn Dam and Reservoir (Under Construction)."

The dam site is scarcely a mile from the shattered ophiolite of Interstate 80, so Moores and I went to see how the dam might relate to the Smartville collision, and we have returned there since. The river's deep canyon is walled with sheared foliated rock—broken, disrupted, deformed lithologies, *Bruchgeitrochen*, tortured rocks—as one would expect of a place where an oceanic island arc had sutured onto the continent. There were sheeted dikes, serpentines, plagiogranites, gabbros, and other items from the ocean suite. The type of dam chosen in 1967 by the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation was a thin arch of concrete rising six hundred and eighty-five feet from channel to crest. Its purpose was to store winter runoff for use in summer, supplementing the storage behind Folsom Dam, fifteen miles downstream. The new reservoir, Lake Auburn, would reach twenty miles into the Sierra, filling two forks of the river—up the North Fork past Codfish Creek and Shirt Tail Creek beyond Yankee Jim's almost to Iowa Hill, and up the Middle Fork over New York Bar and Murderers Bar and the Ruck-a-Chucky Rapids to Volcanoville. The lake would cover ten thousand acres and be twice as deep as the Yellow Sea.

When Moores and I first visited the site, in 1978, it resembled one of the huge excavations flushed out by the hoses of hydraulic mining. Benched roadways descended switchbacks a thousand feet down the canyon walls. A cofferdam had tucked the river to one side. Reaching eleven hundred and fifty feet across the canyon floor lay the white concrete of the dam's base. From the outset, the construction project had had to deal with the inconvenience of the faulting that had followed the arrival of the Smartville Block. The dam site was squarely in the suture zone. Under the dam's foundation ran a fracture known to engineers as the F-1 Fault. A tectonic event on the scale of an arc-to-continent docking will not result in every fissure's being filled with quartz and gold. Countless empty cracks remain. In order to secure the dam's basement, the Reclamation engineers had performed what they described as "dental work," a "root canal." They had sealed in the Smartville fault zone with three hundred and thirty thousand cubic yards of grout.

Moores remarked, "If you want to find a fault in California, look for a dam."

Scarcely had the dental work been completed when, in 1975, an earthquake struck near Oroville, forty-five miles up the Smartville Block. Its Richter magnitude was 5.7. Near Oroville on the Feather River was the eighth-largest dam in the world. It had been completed in 1968, only seven years before the earthquake, and gradually its reservoir had impounded forty-six hundred million tons of water, or enough to put a lot of pressure on the rocks below. It was a gravity dam, broad and squat, an earth-fill dam, and what it had been filled with was seventy-eight million cubic yards of hydraulic-gold-mine tailings. Absorbing the earthquake, the dam just sat there, holding its lake. However, the United States Geological Survey (a sibling agency of Reclamation within the Department of the Interior) quietly noted that twenty-

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five per cent of reservoirs of comparable depth had, by their sheer weight, triggered earthquakes. The earthquake at Oroville had been five times larger than the maximum earthquake that the dam at Auburn was designed to withstand.

This collection of facts soon assembled itself in the editorial offices of the Sacramento *Bee*. On its front page the *Bee* envisioned an earthquake that would knock out Auburn Dam, releasing water that would in less than two hours stand in Sacramento twenty feet deep. In the words of a former Assistant Secretary of the Interior, this would be "the worst peacetime disaster in American history." Estimates were that a quarter of a million people would drown.

The federal government considers faults inactive if they haven't jumped for a hundred thousand years. The latest known movement along the F-1 Fault in Auburn was in the Jurassic—a hundred and forty million years before the present—but that did not soothe Sacramento. Work on Auburn Dam was suspended. In 1978, Moores and I found the site silent, dry, reliquary. It looked that way eleven years later, when we went there again. Geologic time and human time seemed to have met and parted.

Mountain lions go through the dam site. Bears. Feral goats. The project is dormant and appears dead, or vice versa, depending on how the beholder eyes it. The bureau keeps a skeleton crew there, each of whom speaks of the dam in the future positive.

You ask at what altitude the lake level was to be.

Response: "The lake level will be eleven hundred and thirty feet."

You ask if the boat ramp would have been paved.

Response: "Yes, that will be paved."

The gravel boat ramp, several hundred yards long, descends a steep slope and ends high and nowhere, a dangling cul-de-sac. The skeletons call it "the largest and highest unused boat ramp in California." Houses that cling to the canyon sides look into the empty pit. They were built around the future lakeshore under the promise of rising water. You can almost see their boat docks projecting into the air. Thirty-three hundred quarter-acre lots were platted in a subdivision called Auburn Lake Trails.

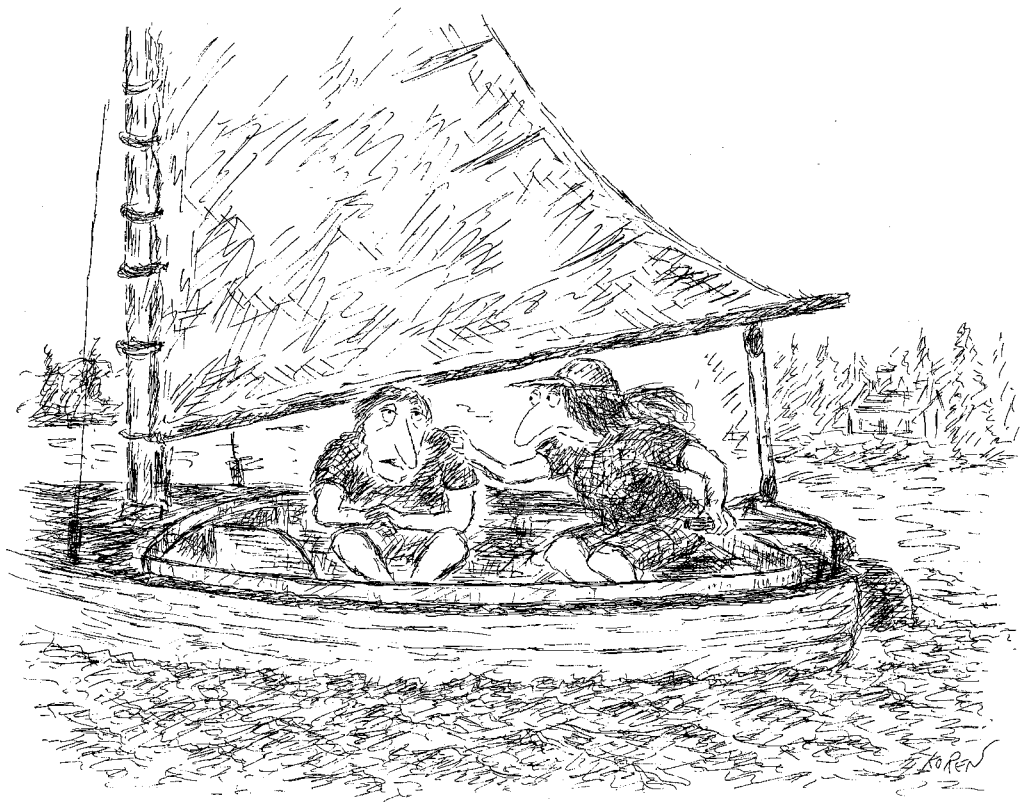
Moores wanted to know if a geology student from Davis might be permitted to study the rocks that had been exposed during construction.

"Fine, but we would not want the student's conclusions to inconvenience the dam."

The dam has cost three hundred million dollars so far. The bureau spends a million dollars a year maintaining the site while nothing happens.

We looked for a cup of coffee in Cool, California, after crossing the American River on a seven-hundred-foot-high bridge. Not particularly long, the bridge was built so high in order to clear the lake that wasn't there. From houses in Cool, picture windows framed the lake air. There were numerous for-sale signs. Mother Lode Realty. Cool was a placer-mining camp of the eighteen-fifties. In Cool Quarry, marine limestone is mined now—a lenticular pod, a third of a cubic mile, shoved into California by the arriving Smartville Block. If you had lived on the moon then, as a full earth came into the sky you would have seen two large continents, one above the other, surrounded and divided by ocean. West to east, the dividing seas were the incipient Caribbean (Central America was not there), the incipient Atlantic, and—from Gibraltar through China—the long water known in geology as Tethys. Worldwide, fossils from that time are described as Tethyan. Tethys, mother of rivers, was the consort of Oceanus. Cool was named for Aaron Cool. In the limestone pod in Cool, California, caught up in the docking of the Smartville Block, are Tethyan fusilinids and Tethyan corals.

As an overriding plate scrapes the plate below, it acts like the blade of a bulldozer and piles up sand, seashells, cherts, phyllites—whatever happens to be there. Impressive amounts of material can be accreted in this manner. As the Philippine Plate has scraped westward, overlapping the Eurasian Plate, an accretionary wedge has risen as Taiwan. In an arc-to-continent collision that is reducing the distance between Taipei and Beijing, Taiwan is the first piece of the West Luzon Island Arc to



"I sound more bitter than I am!"

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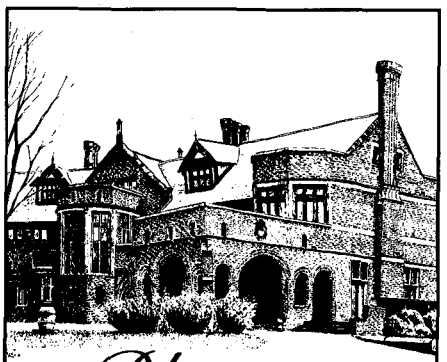

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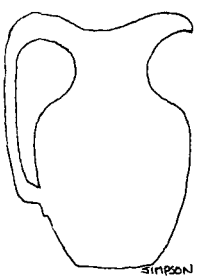
reach the Eurasian slope. In the mélange of rocks in the Taiwan accretionary wedge are not only sands, seashells, cherts, and phyllites but enough scraped-up ocean-floor debris—sheeted dikes, pillow lavas, gabbros, serpentines—to be known as the East Taiwan Ophiolite. A large and intact package of ocean crust-and-mantle can be expected to follow, as one did when Smartville began to close with North America.

The Smartville Block pushed before it not only the limestone of Cool and the schists and serpentines of Auburn Dam but also the red-weathered phyllites and the argillites and cherts we had seen along the interstate as we descended toward Auburn. These and a great miscellany of additional rocks were Smartville's mélange, its accretionary prism—highly foliated, sheared, broken, disrupted, deformed—caught up in the Smartville suture, the docking of arc and continent.



There was, of course, a subduction zone—a trench—between the arc and the continent as they drew together, and in the collision it disappeared. It was actually stuffed shut, according to present theory. First, ocean crust-and-mantle of the North American Plate went down the trench. Eventually, the continental rock itself reached the trench and jammed it, like a bagel in a toaster. Continents are too light and thick to be subducted, and where they arrive at trenches the trenches cease to function. Australia has jammed the trench to the north of it with such force that it has produced New Guinea. As Moores envisions the Jurassic event in California, a large overlap of Smartville ocean crust (the upper plate) was left lying on the North American continental slope after subduction stopped. The region cooled in the post-collisional stillness. The lower, west-moving plate was no longer descending, dragging everything downward. Isostasy, the force that lifts light objects when other forces cease to hold them down, began to work on the combined terranes. Lifting them, it broke off a large piece of the Smartville ocean crust-and-mantle and carried it into the air in what would eventually become the foothills of the Sierra Nevada.

As a geological and geophysical specialty, the study of ophiolites is only a few years old, and therefore provokes argument on almost any question raised—from the environment of the origin of the rock itself to the putative method by which it made its way from extracontinental depths to dry land. The emplacement story for the Smartville Block was worked out by Eldridge Moores.

Descending westward, just below Auburn, you cross the thousand-foot contour, and the Great Central Valley comes into view, running flat out of sight to the horizon. Sacramento is down there, and, fifteen miles farther, Davis. It is an abrupt, absolute change of physiographic worlds, where the mountains hinge. The Smartville Block extends under the valley and ends beneath the Coast Ranges.

After the trench at Auburn disappeared, another one had to develop, as the trailing edge of Smartville became the new front of the North American Plate, moving west. To balance the earth's books by consuming an amount of ocean crust comparable to what is made at spreading centers, subduction zones develop when and where they are needed. Across geologic time, subduction zones have come and gone quite often. On one side of the Smartville Block the new subduction must have been developing even while the old subduction died on the other. "For sure," Moores said. "You've got to produce that convergence somewhere. You don't cut things off. The subduction here at Auburn was Permian to early Jurassic. The new subduction zone to the west was operating by the late Jurassic, and it operated all through Cretaceous and into Tertiary time. The volcanoes came up in the Sierra, and the main batholith formed. I think the geology is really neat. The new plate margins produced their own accretionary prism, piling up out there to the west of us to become the rest of California."

—JOHN MCPHEE

(This is the first part of a three-part article.)

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Waterville—The theme of this year's Roche de Boeuf parade is the celebration of the 100th anniversary of Columbus discovering America.—*Bowling Green (Ohio) Sentinel-Tribune.*

There's the Boeuf.

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A REPORTER AT LARGE

OPEN ROAD TO PEACE

ISRAEL, since the Knesset election on June 23rd, which returned the Labor Party to power, has been disporting itself in a state of high—well, medium—rapture. Such a state is scarcely a surprise among Labor Party supporters, who last tasted electoral victory in the grim aftermath of the Yom Kippur War, of 1973. But, oddly, even Likud supporters seemed, if not rapturous, at least relieved at the outcome. Early this year, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's Likud Party was far ahead in the polls, and Labor seemed almost resigned to another term in opposition. Then Shamir's government was struck by a series of calamities, to which it seemed unable to respond. Gradually, both friends and foes of Likud realized that the government had lost its zest for political combat, its vigor to confront problems—even its will to rule.

Most Israelis date the start of the decline to the peace conference last November in Madrid, but a trap had been set in March of 1990, when the national-unity government, over which Shamir presided, was brought down by a challenge from the peace-oriented Shimon Peres, then the head of Labor. Peres's inability to put together a governing coalition after Shamir's fall eventually doomed him as Labor's leader; it also left Shamir the captive of Israel's aggressive right wing, and of his own right-wing disposition as well. Under pressure from Washington, Shamir went to Madrid, and persuaded the world that he could be a peacemaker, but in the ensuing negotiations with the Arabs he nullified that impression by the rocklike positions he took. (In June, after the election, Shamir acknowledged a plan to drag the negotiations on for ten years.) Notwithstanding, the right-wingers, who had not wanted Shamir to go to Madrid at all, could not put their trust in someone who had become even a putative champion of peace. As for the Israelis who were excited by the prospect of genuine peace talks—a majority, by all indications—they recognized by spring that they had been taken at Madrid, and that Shamir was not their man.

The Bush Administration had by then reached the same conclusion, so when Shamir came to Washington with a request for ten billion dollars in loan guarantees to settle immigrants from the former Soviet Union the President did not hesitate to set a condition that he knew Shamir could not accept. The condition—that Israel halt the construction of settlements in the Occupied Territories—went to the heart of the right-wing vision that the West Bank and the Gaza Strip belong to Israel alone. Shamir at first believed that he could bypass the President and get the money from Congress. When he found that he was mistaken, he took a defiant pose, and intensified the construction in the Territories; meanwhile, the needs of the immigrants went unattended to, and further immigration dropped to a trickle. Publicly, Bush played the issue in a low key, averting a nationalist backlash that might have helped Shamir. Even Likud supporters acknowledge that Shamir was outmaneuvered, and was left without a strategy for dealing with Bush. Israelis agree that it was Bush's firmness on the settlements, more than anything else, that determined the outcome of the election.

As Likud slid in public esteem, Shamir made matters worse by vetoing an electoral-reform measure that had acquired strong public support. He was further hurt by a report from the state comptroller's office that cited widespread waste and corruption in construction programs administered by the Housing Minister, the controversial Ariel Sharon, in the Territories. As damaging as anything else was that he proved unable to control—in fact, was a participant in—an extremely bitter struggle among contenders for power within Likud. Many political observers said the infighting was the inevitable result of Likud's having been in office too long. Others said that it was nothing less than an effort to clarify, once and for all, the Party's character, which had been unresolved since the retirement, in 1983, of Menachem Begin, Likud's patron saint. Whatever the explanation, the struggle weakened Shamir's claim to leadership and left Likud's top echelon looking like snarling wolves, each fighting for himself without concern for the good of the pack.

Meanwhile, Labor, which had been divided for nearly two decades by the acerbic rivalry between Peres and Yitzhak Rabin, was getting its act

"For God's sake, Parker, there are twenty-three of us vice-presidents in the company! Stop with this 'heartbeat away' garbage!"

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together. Peres, whose public service went back to pre-independence days, had failed in four tries since 1977 to lead Labor to a victory. Rabin, the Army's chief of staff during the Six-Day War, had served a lacklustre term as Prime Minister between 1974 and 1977, and had been scheming ever since to regain the top post. On one issue the two saw eye to eye: they were not yet ready to turn over the leadership to a younger generation, as many had proposed. Instead, they agreed to let the Party membership—not, as before, the Party power brokers—decide between them, American style, in a primary election, the first in Israel's history. A second primary was to be held, to choose—under Israel's complex system of proportional representation—the names that would appear, and in what order, on the list of Party candidates for the Knesset. The first primary took place last February, and more than a hundred thousand Labor Party members chose Rabin, by a narrow margin; in April, rejecting many hawkish old-timers, they chose a range of new and younger Knesset candidates, many of whom had campaigned as reformers and doves. The Labor ticket thus went to the voters riding the wave of the primary victory, and also presenting a fresh cast of characters carrying an invigorated message.

Underlining Likud's weakness, Rabin conducted a campaign that focussed on his own attributes of leadership, a strategy that followed naturally from his primary victory, and departed from the Israeli tradition of party preëminence. Israelis had never before encountered such a personalized campaign; the Party's propaganda was all labelled "The Labor Party Under Yitzhak Rabin." The strategy was curious, in that Rabin had little ostensible charisma and no noteworthy record as a politician, but Shamir was inferior on both counts. Likud attacked Rabin as emotionally unstable and a drunk, but Shamir, who seemed worn out, was hardly an attractive alternative. Probably because of the pallid character of the two chief candidates, there was no emotion in the campaign; it had an anti-politics ring, with the voters' favorite bumper sticker declaring "We're Fed Up."

To call the election a referendum on peace would be an overstatement, at best. Both parties asserted that, in principle, they wanted peace. But Likud insisted that it was attainable even if "not one inch" of the Occupied Territories was yielded, while Rabin, although he rejected the not-one-inch slogan, emphasized that he would not agree to a Palestinian state, a redivision of Jerusalem, or any recognition of the P.L.O. In vowing to halt "political" settlements, while leaving "security" settlements intact, he introduced to the Israeli lexicon a distinction that he never defined. Instead, he promised a revised set of national priorities: education, infrastructure, industrial investment, cleaning up the slums of Israel's development towns and coastal cities. In conjunction with military superiority, he said, these priorities would make Israel strong enough internally to contemplate the risk of peace; far from claiming to be the candidate of detente with the Arabs, Rabin stressed security, which, as he knew, plays well to the historical fears of a Jewish electorate.

But there was another, subliminal message that Labor conveyed. It was a recognition that Israelis were tired of the intifada; of being a pariah in the world community; of squabbling with the United States; of submitting to Zionist extremists who demanded, whatever the cost in human values, the redemption of all land from the Mediterranean to the Jordan River. Israelis had also had enough of political polarization. For its first three decades, Israel had lived with the understanding that the state would undertake no major initiative toward the Arabs without a public consensus. Likud, under the sway of Sharon, broke that agreement by invading Lebanon in 1982, and since then it had, through force and stealth, promoted a creeping annexation of the Occupied Territories. "Likud never knew how to generate public support," a friend suggested to me. "It did everything under cover." Rabin promised policies of reconciliation and repair, which suggested that his aim was to leave only the extremists of the Greater Israel movement out of the national consensus.

Autonomy for the Palestinians in the Territories seemed to be part of that consensus. Begin had committed Israel to it at Camp David, and after five exhausting years of intifada the country clearly accepted it. There were, however, differences in defining it. Shamir's vision was a permanent self-rule limited to Palestinian community life, and he also proposed to make that self-rule permanent. Rabin, vowing to reach an agreement within nine months, never disclosed how much self-government he was prepared to grant, perhaps because he was unsure himself, but he recognized autonomy as a temporary station on the way to peace. Concerning peace itself—that is, the return of territory as part of a final arrangement with the Palestinians—he acknowledged that there was no national consensus, and he scarcely mentioned the subject during the campaign. Camp David had provided that peace talks would begin after three years of autonomy, and that the terms agreed upon then would be applied in the fifth year. Rabin's strategy was to give himself four years in power to build a consensus on peace, then submit to a popular vote in the 1996 Knesset election. The 1992 election, as he saw it, was a referendum on getting the process started.

WHEN the votes were counted, Labor was the big winner and Likud the big loser. In the hundred-and-twenty-member Knesset, Rabin's party went from thirty-nine seats to forty-four, while Shamir's dropped from forty to thirty-two. But analysts of Israeli elections must look at the panoply of small parties that, in the absence of a majority party, inevitably share in governing the state. In that light, Labor's victory was far less impressive. As Labor's natural partner in reaching out to the Arabs, Meretz, a coalition of three small peace parties, went from ten seats to twelve. But Tsomet and Moledet (the more extreme of the two in favoring "transfer" of all Arabs out of the territories), natural allies of Likud in blocking an accommodation, went from a combined four seats to eleven. Moreover, the religious parties, which had been reliable allies of Likud, had sixteen seats (having slipped from eighteen); added to the others, they would have given Likud fifty-nine Knesset votes, still short of a majority but more than the Labor-Meretz total of fifty-six. To reach a majority, Labor turned to two Arab parties; their five votes put it over the top with sixty-one.

"We support the coalition, but we're not members of it," Abdelwahab

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Darawshe, the leader of the Democratic Arab Party, told me. Darawshe, who wears a small mustache and a bewildered expression, was a Labor Party Knesset member who resigned in 1988 in protest over the harsh suppression by Rabin, then the Defense Minister, of the intifada. Though his hopes of leading a major Arab bloc faltered, his party grew this year from one seat to two. (The other Arab party, with three seats, is Hadash, a vestige of the Israeli Communist Party.) "To join the coalition, we claimed a Cabinet seat, but Rabin refused," he said. (A few weeks later, Rabin appointed two Arabs as deputy ministers.) "He did, however, concede important points in the area of peacemaking and ending discrimination against our people. When he campaigned in our villages, he said he was ashamed of the conditions of life that he saw. Shamir had never given our concerns a thought. But the experience of Israeli Arabs with the Labor Party is also bitter. I'm more hopeful about Rabin's promises than I was about those of the past, but that's because Labor needs us now. If Rabin loses our five Knesset votes, Shamir will be back in an instant."

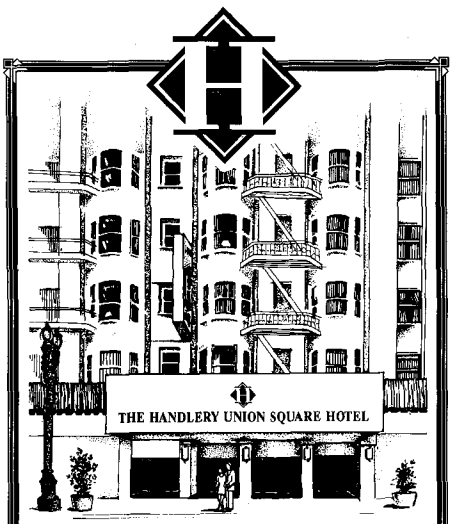
I spoke with Darawshe in the members' dining room of the Knesset, which provides a cornucopia of material for a visiting journalist. A large, simply decorated room adjacent to the chamber and bathed in sunlight, the dining room is the Knesset's social center. Save for rabbis in black hats and coats and leggy young women making a fashion statement, the dress code is extremely informal, and the atmosphere is jovial and familiar, even among political foes. Members huddle with their aides over tea or hold caucuses, negotiating deals. Invited for a meeting with one member, a journalist can remain seated at a table for the rest of the day, collaring other members as they walk by.

After Darawshe left me, I met with Likud's Ehud Olmert, who had been the Health Minister in the Shamir Cabinet and is said to be an up-and-coming political star. "Sure, we were badly beaten, but if you hear that we're destroyed, forget it," Olmert said. "In October, Labor was trailing in the polls by more than two to one, and in half a year it all turned around. Frankly, we lost because of bad performance. Shamir didn't have to change the not-one-inch policy, but he should have conveyed a more accommodating impression. Labor is enjoying a honeymoon now, and I can understand its euphoria, but wait until Rabin has to make some hard, unpopular decisions. We'll elect a new leadership in December in our own primaries—the old warhorses like Shamir and Sharon will be out. By then, we'll have a young guy as leader, and we'll have made some changes in the not-one-inch principle. In the next election, it will be tired, seventy-five-year-old Rabin against a Likud leader of forty-plus. Labor will have slipped, Likud will have recuperated, and everything will be open."

Having no doubts about Likud's recuperative powers, Rabin knows that his standing in the country is related to his ability to enact the reforms he has promised, and for that a two-seat majority that is dependent on the Arabs is not enough. Likud correctly pointed out that though Labor's victory made it the largest Knesset party, the right-wing bloc had a *Jewish* majority, which is a sensitive matter in the Jewish state. Israeli governments have historically refused to rely on Arab parties for a majority. So Rabin, even before taking office, looked around for help to enlarge his support.

He turned first to Tsomet, under the leadership of Rafael Eitan (he is known to all Israelis as Raful), who, like Rabin, is a former Army chief of staff. Raful created a scandal some years ago by comparing Palestinians to "drugged cockroaches in bottles." In the campaign, he supported reducing the influence of the religious parties and promoting clean government, but he also opposed any concessions that would limit Israeli power in the Territories. Tsomet, Rabin knew, might tilt his coalition to the right, but it would also serve him as a buffer against attacks from Likud. Rabin appealed to Eitan on the clean-government and religious issues, while apparently offering no compromises on his peacemaking plans. To the relief of Meretz, the two ex-Army chiefs failed to reach agreement, and Tsomet went into opposition.

Rabin then turned to the religious bloc, a cluster of small parties whose historical interest in power (it has been represented in every government since independence) concealed both an anti-



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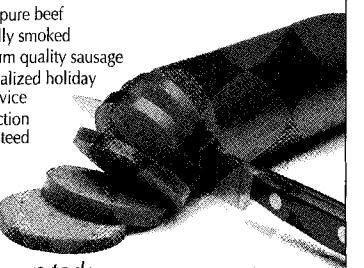

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Labor trend and deep internal divisions. The bloc was dominated by rabbis who were Ashkenazi (of European origin), and who had grown increasingly hawkish since the victory of 1967, while failing to take account of the rising strength of the Sephardim (Jews from the Arab world) in the religious community. Within the bloc, Rabin's target was Shas, a Sephardic party, which was more dovish than the others, though it had belonged to Shamir's coalition. Rabin wooed Shas and, to the dismay of the Ashkenazi parties, won over its leaders, gaining six Knesset seats. The move ended Rabin's mathematical dependence on the Arabs. More important, it gave him a majority that was comfortably large, ideologically consistent, and ready to back him in shifting both domestic and foreign priorities.

It took Rabin less than three weeks of bargaining to form this government—unusually fast in Israel—and by then it no longer seemed to matter whether Israeli voters had mandated a change in direction or simply a change in personnel: Rabin was popular enough to interpret the returns as he chose. Familiar though he was to Israelis after nearly two decades in politics, he was somehow able to generate excitement and a sense of anticipation. He had aspired to the powers of an American President, and seemed to have attained them. In naming himself Defense Minister, he acquired control over the Occupied Territories; for the sake of Party harmony, he made his rival, Shimon Peres, the Foreign Minister, but he retained control over peace negotiations and relations with Washington. As for Yitzhak Shamir, though he had been only a few seats away from power on the morning after the election, he was already a forgotten man.

In his inaugural address of July 13th—reminiscent, no doubt by design, of John Kennedy's—Rabin declared, "The citizens of Israel, and people in countries throughout the world, look forward today to our embarking on a new path, to fresh momentum, to turning a new page in the annals of the state. . . . This government is determined to expend all the energy, to take any path, to do everything necessary, possible, and more, for the sake of national and personal security, to achieve peace and prevent war, to do away with unemployment, for the sake of immigration and absorption, for economic growth, to strengthen the foundations of democracy and the rule of law, to insure equality for all citizens and to protect human rights. . . . No longer are we necessarily 'a people that dwells alone,' and no longer is it true that 'the whole world is against us.' We must overcome the sense of isolation that has held us in its thrall for almost half a century. We must join the international movement toward peace, reconciliation, and coöperation that is spreading over the entire globe—lest we be the last to remain, all alone, in the station."

Israel's self-confidence suddenly seemed to soar. In Tel Aviv, there were reports of dancing in the streets, and the stock exchange took off to an all-time high. One Israeli wryly commented to me, "The cork is out of the champagne bottle. Now we drink, and I hope we like the taste."

MORE than twenty years ago, when I first met Yitzhak Rabin, he was Israel's Ambassador in Washington—a dour man of strong opinions, a hard-liner in dealing with the Arabs, a promoter of American involvement in Vietnam, and a campaigner for Richard Nixon's reëlection. Over the next decade, I occasionally met him, both in government and out, and nothing he said led me to believe that he had softened. In the mid-nineteen-eighties, I had about ten hours of interviews with him, in preparation for a book on the Arab-Israeli conflict. He told me that, as an Army man and a mainstream Zionist, he saw the Occupied Territories in security, not ideological, terms. Israel would be unwise to annex them, he said, and rule permanently over large numbers of Arabs. In his view, the chief danger to the state came not from the Arabs of the Territories but from hostile Arab states. He supported the so-called Allon plan, he said, which advocated security settlements along the Jordan River, on the Golan Heights, and at a few crucial locations in the West Bank. But more important to him—an obsession, really—was an impregnable Army. From these talks, I concluded that Rabin would never be the man who would reach out to Israel's neighbors to make peace.

When I visited Israel in July, shortly after the election, I telephoned old friends to ask whether they thought that Rabin had changed in any significant way. In recent years, after all, he had identified himself with the Labor Party's hard-line wing, and when he was Defense Minister his policy for defeating the intifada had been to club the Palestinians into submission. In campaigning to lead Labor into the election, he claimed that he would be a tougher guardian than Peres of Israel's security interests; this argument—were it not for Peres's record as a loser—would probably not have won him the post.

"He hasn't changed his philosophy, any more than his personality," I was told by Yoram Peri, a former adviser to Rabin who now edits *Davar*, a newspaper that reflects the views of the Labor Party. "He is still obsessed with security and doesn't love the Arabs, but his attitude toward the Palestinians has changed. He always saw them as a political, and not a security, threat to the state, but he thought the way to remove the threat was through the Arab governments. The intifada gave him a new respect for the Palestinians. He came to recognize that he could not ignore them or manipulate them, that they were a serious adversary. Now he knows that he has to deal with them. It is typical of Zionism that Rabin doesn't have an ideological basis for doing it, and so he must improvise. But, unlike Shamir, he knows that autonomy cannot be the last word. The final arrangement depends on how well the Palestinians handle their autonomy, and, particularly, on whether they can control the anti-Israel forces within the Territories."

"Rabin spent his formative years as an Army staff officer," Menachem Brinker, a professor of literature at the Hebrew University, said to me. "His thinking today is the product of those years. Rabin's concern is strategy. Zionism's Biblical themes have no resonance for him. He is totally unreligious, and has no esteem for rabbis. He detests the mysticism of Gush Emunim and the other Greater Israel proponents, and believes he must isolate and defeat them. Rabin is a member of the generation in the Labor

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Party which knows that, after the Six-Day War, the Party wasted ten years, by not even trying to settle things with the Arabs. Now his model is Ben-Gurion, whose attitude was 'Leave open the bridges to the Arabs, keep on good terms with the great powers, and take what you can as the opportunity arises.' His electoral victory was thin, and he must deliver on his campaign pledges if he is to win the confidence of the people. Like a good staff officer, he has a plan, of which Phase One consists of autonomy, economic and political reform, and persuading the Israelis of the benefits of peace. Phase Two, after the next election, is real peace. Rabin knows there is in Israel a growing consensus for peace, and that if he fails to deliver it he will have Likud back on his heels."

Eleven days after the new government took office, the Jerusalem *Post*, a newspaper that supports Likud, ran a headline that declared "RABIN HITS THE GROUND RUNNING." Addressing the issue that had paralyzed negotiations since the Madrid conference, Rabin ordered a freeze on settlements in the Occupied Territories. The fine print of the order made it far more symbolic than substantive, however. Announcing that the cost of stopping construction of homes already under way was prohibitive, the government cancelled contracts on fewer than seven thousand units, while authorizing the completion of nearly ten thousand.

Observers immediately noted that the decision would invite as many as fifty thousand inhabitants to join the hundred thousand already living in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. (In all, some two hundred and fifty thousand Israelis live on the lands taken from the Arabs in 1967, including a hundred and forty thousand in East Jerusalem and fifteen thousand on the Golan Heights.) But the government combined the freeze with a series of administrative decrees that suspended building on roads, factories, and social facilities in the Territories. It also began paring the wide-ranging financial incentives that the Shamir government had offered to promote settlement. In effect, though the new building would make space for fifty thousand more settlers, the signals Rabin was sending declared that life in the Territories was going to get much harder.

Palestinians in the Territories, meanwhile, wondered whether life was going to get easier, and the signals were mixed. Rabin took a positive step in his first week by forestalling a battle between the Israeli Army and three thousand students whom it held under siege for three days on the campus of An-Najah University, in Nablus. The Army was after six young militants who were hiding on the campus under the students' protection. Having placed the city under curfew, it threatened to storm the campus, and the students, some of whom were armed, made preparations to resist. With bloodshed looming, Rabin offered to call off the troops if the six militants would consent to voluntary deportation to Jordan for up to three years. After the election, the aggressiveness of neither Israelis nor Arabs in the Territories showed signs of abating, and both Arab and Israeli extremists saw the compromise as a sellout. But the leadership on both sides wanted to avoid bloodshed, particularly with Secretary of State James Baker due to visit Jerusalem to discuss the next round of the autonomy talks. When Baker arrived, on July 19th, the An-Najah crisis had been resolved, and Rabin, with some Palestinian help, had won his first trophy as a peacemaker.

RABIN extended a warm welcome to Baker, in contrast to the uncivil treatment the Secretary had often received from Shamir. He persuaded Baker to accept the cutback in the Territories as the construction freeze that the United States had promoted, and Baker promised, in return, to spread the word to the Arabs that Israel had changed direction and embarked on the road to peace. Baker also agreed to recommend to President Bush—who, on the eve of his own reëlection campaign, was more than ready to agree—the extension to Israel of the much disputed ten billion dollars in loan guarantees.

It was an index of the transformation of popular attitudes that Israelis in the streets also greeted Baker amicably. When Henry Kissinger and Jimmy Carter arrived in Israel in the nineteen-seventies on peacemaking missions, they were publicly vilified, and even Baker had drawn hundreds of protesters on previous visits. I saw only one hostile sign this time, a placard flashed by about two dozen right-wing extremists across the street from Rabin's office. Referring to a (much denied) obscene remark attrib-

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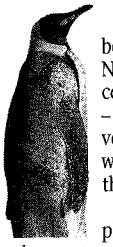

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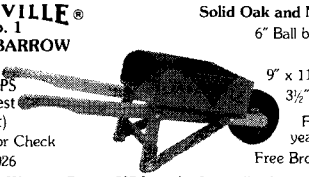

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uted to Baker last March by New York's former Mayor Edward Koch, the sign proclaimed, "You Said 'Fuck the Jews.' Now You Come to Get Their Votes." The Israeli police allowed the protesters to display the sign for a few minutes, then ordered them to move on.

On July 21st, a day after his meeting with Baker, Rabin flew to Cairo for a talk with President Hosni Mubarak; it was the first meeting between the heads of the two countries in six years. A hundred reporters and photographers, who had arrived on an El-Al charter from Tel Aviv an hour earlier, were on hand when Rabin's plane, displaying Israeli Air Force insignia and decorated with Israeli and Egyptian flags, drew up on the tarmac. An Egyptian reporter near me, referring to the Israeli Air Force's unfriendly call in 1967, quipped, "Here they come again." The Egyptian Prime Minister, Atif Sidqi, greeted Rabin at the foot of the stairs, and a military band welcomed him with "Hatikva," Israel's national anthem. After reviewing the honor guard, Rabin climbed into a limousine for the short drive to the Kuba Palace. The press buses followed, and while Rabin and Mubarak met, the journalists sat or snoozed on the lawn, under trees shading them from the bright sun. At about four o'clock, the press was summoned to a gold-trimmed receiving room, where photographers, pushing and shoving for position, shocked the invariably polite Egyptians. "This is not civilized," Mubarak's spokesman shouted. "We have to behave ourselves or the press conference will be cancelled." Finally, security men formed a ring around the table at which Rabin and Mubarak were seated in red plush chairs, behind banks of microphones, and the press conference began.

Mubarak made it clear in his remarks that he was disappointed by the limits of Rabin's settlement freeze, though he called it "a good step on the right track," and added, "I remind you that Mr. Rabin is only one week in office. I can't ask him for too many things." Rabin paid homage to Egypt's historical importance in initiating the peace process, and though he refused—as he had throughout the campaign—to promise explicitly to trade land for peace, he reaffirmed Israel's commitment to Security Council Resolution 242, which sets out the land-for-peace formula. If there was a substantive accomplishment, it was probably Mubarak's success in persuading Rabin not to overlook Syria in the negotiations. (During the campaign, Rabin had stressed Palestinian autonomy, and dismissed prospects of useful talks with Damascus; on returning from Cairo, he named a dovish professor to be head of the delegation dealing with the Syrians.) Later that day, Rabin laid a wreath on the tomb of President Anwar Sadat, whose trip to Jerusalem in 1977 led to the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, and he also visited the main Cairo synagogue, no doubt with an eye on his coalition partners in the religious bloc in the Knesset. The next day, the Israeli press exulted over how well the two leaders had got along, and pronounced the visit a success.

On August 10th, Rabin met with Bush in Kennebunkport. Before leaving for the United States, he had announced his intention of amending a controversial law that barred Israelis from talking to members of the P.L.O. Several Israelis had been jailed under its provisions; more important, it had also been used against the Palestinians to discourage consultations between the peace delegation and top P.L.O. officials. Promised since the government's first days, the change, timed as an offering to Bush, acknowledged the reality of the P.L.O.'s involvement in the peace talks. At Kennebunkport, Bush, though he was not fully in agreement on the scope of the settlement freeze, endorsed the loan guarantees, at least in principle, and the two announced that the peace talks would resume on August 24th and would last a month.

As Rabin's host, Bush made sure that his guest enjoyed not only a political but a social success, as a symbol that the American-Israeli friendship was on the mend. In Washington a few days later, Rabin sharply dressed down the American Israel lobby for harming Israel's interests by consistently supporting Shamir's positions. Before returning home, he also met with Jewish fund-raisers, who had routinely interceded for Shamir when American-Israeli relations were going badly, and told them sternly that their services as middlemen would no longer be needed—that he would take full responsibility for dealing with Washington himself.

For Rabin, however, the Bush meeting was an achievement that went beyond the loan guarantees. Some Rabin-watchers I met in Israel argued that though the public had focussed on the ten billion dollars to ease economic distress, Rabin, pondering the lessons of the Gulf War, was more interested in repairing strategic ties to the United States. For many years, the whole Middle East had known that Israel, while officially saying "We shall not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the Middle East," was already well ahead of its neighbors in developing these weapons, and probably had a sizable nuclear arsenal. Then the Gulf War showed that Iraq could hit Israel with Scud missiles, and though Saddam Hussein had no nuclear weapons, he is assumed to have had chemical and bacteriological warheads that, for whatever reasons, he did not use. Since the war, Iraq has resumed its nuclear research and, just as ominously, has been joined by Iran in the effort to acquire nuclear arms, while Syria is said to have obtained high-accuracy missiles and to have targeted them on Israel. During the past year, several Israeli generals have hinted at plans to bomb Iran. Vetoing the idea, Rabin has said that nuclear facilities are now so spread out that bombing cannot eliminate them. In his inaugural address, he signalled his concern by saying, "The possibility that nuclear weapons will be introduced into the Middle East in the coming years is a very grave and negative development" for Israel. Convinced that Israel can no longer rely for security on a passing nuclear superiority, he has spoken of working with Washington—within a framework of peacemaking—on a program to limit weapons of mass destruction throughout the Middle East.

"Rabin, unlike Shamir and the Likud people, understands the limits of Israeli military power," I was told by Shai Feldman, an arms-control specialist at the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, at the University of Tel Aviv. "Rabin is not an intellectual, but he is fascinated by strategy. If he does any bedtime reading, it is about weapons. Rabin knows that though Israel won military victories in the Yom Kippur War of 1973 and the Lebanon war of 1982, both were strategic defeats, leaving Israel politically weakened. Having nuclear weapons does not protect us from such defeats. Traditionally,

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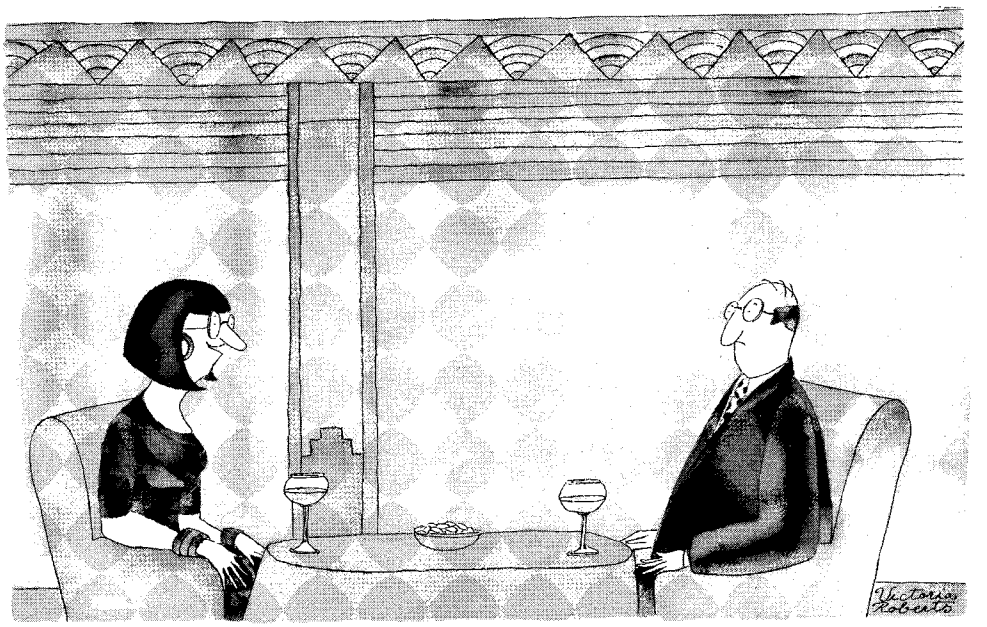
Israel has regarded talks on arms control as a trick that the Arabs, with their bigger conventional forces, were playing to deprive us of our military edge. It was probably true, but the Gulf War and the postwar revelations about the Iraqi nuclear buildup have forced Israel to face up to a new situation. Begin's response to the Iraqi nuclear buildup a decade ago—bombing the reactor near Baghdad—will not solve the problem in Iraq, much less in Iran, today. Rabin has come to recognize that what Israel needs in order to put an end to the nuclear threat is peace. That's one of the reasons he is now talking to the Syrians. The peace negotiations that Baker designed provide a framework for multilateral talks on arms control, and we will be participating. Israel has not yet come to a new policy, but the environment is changing. As the only superpower, the United States plays a more important role than ever in these talks, and I have no doubt that Rabin will have a lot to say to the Americans on the matter."

RABIN's appointment of Shulamit Aloni as Minister of Education and Culture was his most controversial one, partly because she is an outspoken woman, partly because she holds views that are deeply secular. The religious parties found her unacceptable on both counts. She was a threat to their own power over the school system and, they said, a threat to the very nature of Israeli society. A handsome woman of sixty-three, Aloni was born in Tel Aviv and served in the Army during Israel's war of independence. A teacher by training, she was first elected to the Knesset in 1965, as a Labor member. In 1973, she quit the Labor Party, which was too hawkish and hidebound for her, and organized the Citizens Rights Movement (Ratz), which this year led the merger of dovish parties to form Meretz. As No. 1 on the Meretz list, she was, under Israeli parliamentary practice, entitled to a major Cabinet post, and her choice of the education portfolio, which had been sought by Raful, was a factor in Tsomet's refusal to join Rabin's coalition. But Rabin, in naming Aloni, knew very well what he was getting. Aloni was considered one of the few Israeli politicians tough enough not to be intimidated by the bearded clerics who run the religious bloc.



"Oh, it's feeding time in Egoville?"

• •

Aloni's conflict with the rabbis is the latest chapter in a struggle that began before independence over the soul of the Jewish state. For Israel to be Jewish, Jews have asked, must it follow the laws of the Jewish religion? (Arabs ask the same question vis-à-vis Islam.) In the early nineteenth century, Orthodox Jews, fleeing from Enlightenment Europe, settled in Palestine, where they proposed to study the Torah and await the Messiah. The Zionist pioneers who sank roots in Palestine half a century later were influenced by socialist doctrine, and determined to establish a secular nation, which would be a homeland for the beleaguered Jewish people. The two doctrines were incompatible: the Orthodox Jews, known in Israel today as *haredim*, regard a secular Jewish nation as heresy; the Zionists find the theocratic penchant of the *haredim* unacceptable. When Israel was established, in 1948, the two struck a live-and-let-live compromise, but neither was satisfied with it, and both have continued to press for advantage.

One of the arenas of conflict has historically been the Education Ministry. Israel at independence had separate school systems for secular and religious students. More often than not, the Minister of Education was from the National Religious Party, a situation that was objectionable enough to the secularists. But in the nineteen-seventies and eighties, when the two principal parties were almost equal in the Knesset, they seethed at the concessions that Likud made to the rabbis in return for political support—not only ever greater funding for religious schools but increasing influence on the curriculum of the non-religious schools, which are attended by nearly three-fourths of Israeli children. Aloni's appointment was the Labor Party's revenge; it represented the return of secularism to the Ministry. That the power there was now to be exercised by a woman was, for the rabbis, salt in the wound.

"It's a catastrophe, it's an earthquake. Shulamit Aloni is the symbol of the counter-revolution," Rabbi Menachem Porush said as he sat eating a piece of bread, a slice of red pepper, and a tomato. I met Rabbi Porush, a Knesset member of the United Torah Jewry Party, over breakfast one morning at a modest hotel, patronized by Orthodox Jews, in central Jerusalem. A black-coated Santa in girth and joviality, he had been Deputy Minister of Social Welfare in the Shamir government, and readily acknowledged that he would like to be a deputy minister under Rabin. "The religious parties have always had seats in the Cabinet, because we were an important centrist force," he told me. "The problem began after the Six-Day War, when the National Religious Party, the oldest and largest of our parties, shifted its concern from God to hold-

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ing on to the Territories, and became beholden to Likud. My party's concern is the Torah, and we fear the Labor Party, which, at its roots, is still anti-religious. The Council of Sages, under Rabbi Schach, which runs our party, cannot forget that Labor always tried to lure Jewish immigrants away from religion, and now it makes propaganda against us, because we supported Likud. Still, some of us think we must get back into the Cabinet to protect what we have gained. It is Rabbi Schach who says that we cannot, as long as that woman is the Minister."

Eliezer Schach, Israel's most powerful rabbi, is a frail, ninety-six-year-old Torah scholar with an acid tongue. It was his veto of Peres that, two years ago, blocked the formation of a Labor government. Recently, he shocked Israelis by publicly comparing Aloni to the Nazis, saying that her educational reforms aimed at destroying Judaism by secularizing a million Jewish children. He has also said, "In every post that has been in her hands, she has acted against religion. She has desecrated the Sabbath . . . and does not know the difference between a prayer book and the Five Books of Moses. With her in charge of education and culture, there will no longer be the nation of Israel in the Land of Israel." Schach's problems do not stop with Aloni. His authority, derived from the Ashkenazi religious establishment, is being challenged by the Sephardim, who make up more than half of Israel's population. A recent remark he made—that the Sephardim are not yet mature enough to exercise leadership—raised hackles among religious as well as secular Sephardim. Many Ashkenazi *haredim*, like Rabbi Porush, still defer to Schach but object to his refusal to support the government; they contend that in his vindictiveness toward Aloni he is undermining the power and jeopardizing the interests of the Orthodox community.

"The key to the turmoil among the *haredim* is their vow to preserve their society of scholars," said Menachem Friedman, who is a sociologist at Bar-Ilan, a religious university in a Tel Aviv suburb. Friedman, himself a product of religious schools, is currently doing research at the Hebrew University's Institute for Advanced Studies, in Jerusalem, and that is where we talked. "It is a society of religious Jews who are determined to exclude secular intrusions. It was established early in the nineteenth century by traditional Jews, largely in Eastern Europe, who worried about the defection from religious life brought on by spreading secular values. To prevent defections, it put its children into yeshivas and kept them there, sealed off from contact with the outside world, until their mid-thirties, when they would finally enter the labor market, though with few marketable skills. Now the system is in crisis. Resources from private donors have not kept up with the very high fertility rate of the *haredim*; despite the fertility rate, within the Israeli population the *haredim* are proportionately few. But they are not popular. They look down on Zionism and on secular Israelis. They do not support the state, pay little in taxes, speak Yiddish rather than Hebrew, and do not serve in the Army. For more than a decade, the Likud has been bailing them out—providing state funds for housing, schools, and other benefits. But with Labor in power the system is in real trouble." (Buried in Rabin's inaugural address was a reference to the particularly sensitive issue of military service. "The Minister of Defense," Rabin said, "will appoint a team, under his auspices, to investigate and determine the criteria for exempting yeshiva students from Army service, so as to prevent the abuse of the existing arrangements in this area." The Minister of Defense, of course, is Rabin himself.)

Friedman went on to say, "At the same time, the Ashkenazi rabbis' conflict with the Sephardim has been getting worse. The Sephardim were not originally *haredim*. Most who arrived in Israel were very observant, but they were also patriarchal and traditionalist. They resisted modern influences, which they associated with the Labor Party, and so they drifted into the Ashkenazi religious establishment. Young Sephardim were invited into *haredi* schools and became disciples of Rabbi Schach, and when they set up the Shas Party, in 1982, it was said to have a *haredi* head and a Sephardic body. Understandably, the Sephardim in time developed their own leadership, but Schach refused to accept it. In the last election, he told his loyalists not to vote for Shas, and he suffered a big defeat when Shas won six seats. Now he is losing control over United Torah Jewry, his own party. But his prestige remains high, and he must not be underestimated as a factor in Israel's power struggles.

"Oddly, we know very little about how the sages, the leaders of these parties, exercise their power. While the non-religious parties are becoming more modern—that is, democratized and bureaucratized—the religious are becoming more autocratic, more medieval. They have been seriously corrupted by power, and are badly in need of internal reform. Meanwhile, Shas, being a part of Rabin's government, has a deputy minister under Aloni who supervises the *haredi* schools and gets the benefits of a well-developed patronage system. It is no secret that the Ashkenazim within the religious establishment are furious at being cut out."

While Rabin was negotiating to get the religious parties to enter the government, Avraham Burg, one of the Young Turks of the Labor Party, issued a statement calling the *haredi* criticisms of Shulamit Aloni "an unprecedented scandal." Burg, a son of Yosef Burg, who was one of the early power brokers of the Orthodox establishment, has in his thirties emerged as one of the severest critics of religious influence in Israeli politics. "It's first-rate impertinence that a bunch of *haredi* functionaries, greedy for power and money, are continuing to disgrace Israel, as if they had received a popular mandate," the statement continued. The religious parties "sent the most unqualified people to man public institutions. . . . It would be fitting for United Torah Jewry, which is led by a racist, dispute-mongering old man, to sit quietly for four years, without uttering a word of criticism or mockery aimed at anyone in Israel's new government." Irritated at Burg's remarks, Rabin accused him of trying to sabotage the coalition.

A few days later, I met with Burg, who, as chairman of the Knesset's education committee, has lined up with Aloni, and we talked in his Knesset office. He is himself an observant Jew, and wore a *kipa* on his head. Dismissing Rabin's rebuke, he said that, having been elected in the primary to the Party list (he came in third, after Rabin and Peres), he had a responsibility to his electors, and not to the

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Party's machinery. "The primary introduced a new kind of deputy to the Knesset—independent and fearless," he said. "I cannot be quiet when I see something I think is wrong, even if the Prime Minister asks me." Burg said thirty of the forty-four Labor members took a similarly independent stand, and were prepared to reëxamine the basic canons of Israeli life, including the role of religion.

"The big change would be the adoption of a constitution, which Israel has never had. A constitution would assure the separation of church and state, and end the rule of Jewish fundamentalism in much of our legal system—particularly in family law. Religious feelings remain strong in Israel, however; even secular people define themselves in religious terms and defer to rabbinical authority. We have never debated a Jewish alternative to Orthodox social thinking. The present system, which makes religion a springboard for grabbing power and money, and for enforcing conformist behavior, invites corruption. I believe that Israel must restore religion to the realm of the individual, but I'm way ahead of the country, and it will take time to build a foundation for such change."

More than any other minister, Shulamit Aloni was hurrying to institute changes, in time for the reopening of school in the fall. She was also under daily attack from her critics, and she could not simply ignore them. At Rabin's request, she wrote a letter to the *haredi* Knesset delegations stating that she would keep appropriations for religious education at a high level, but the attacks did not slacken. I met with her at the Education Ministry, a nineteenth-century Arab villa renovated into cramped offices, near the site of the Mandelbaum Gate, which was in its day the only crossing point between East and West Jerusalem.

"Until 1977, it was taken for granted that our schools were humanistic and cultural," Aloni said. "Then Likud took over, and made them nationalistic and religious. Likud gave education a lower priority. It stopped new construction, reduced the school day, and eliminated programs for gifted children and handicapped children. Secular education was starved while religious education got more and more money. The Ministry even held a conference to condemn Darwin. I respect the rabbis' feelings that Jewish tradition should be taught in the schools, but it is not the only tradition that is important to us. Israel is part of Western culture, and our schools cannot forget the classics, science, and the arts. Our children come from many countries. We have to recognize our pluralism, and open their minds to a wider universe. If the Orthodox want to remain in the closed world of another century, that is their decision, but someday that, too, will change, and I think the winds are already blowing.

"In the last two years, the money the Likud took from the secular schools went into schools in the Territories, much of it secretly. They played so many tricks to manipulate funds, and I'm just starting to learn them. If I were a computer, I'd explode. The Attorney General and the State Comptroller said that what they were doing was unlawful, but it continued. Now we're going to systematize a process that used to go on under the table. The Territories will get less, and so will the religious schools, but we will distribute what we have openly and fairly. The problem I see is meeting people's expectations—such high expectations. They will want conditions to get better too fast. It will be hard."

When I asked why the *haredim* were so vehement in their attacks, she answered, "They are trying to scare me, because they don't want any of these changes. They are not Zionists, and they are used to exploiting this country without giving anything in return. If I were a man, they'd come and try to work out the differences, so as to save what they can of what they once received. But I'm a woman, and they are incapable of meeting me as an equal. Rabbi Schach treats me like Savonarola. I can't stop him, but I can't worry about it. The *haredim* see the world differently from the way we do."

ON July 27th, when the Rabin government was just two weeks old, the parliamentary opposition—Likud, Tsomet, the National Religious Party, Moledet, and United Torah Jewry—filed its first no-confidence motion, citing the ban on the construction of housing and highways in the Occupied Territories, and saying that it was anti-Zionist and the first step toward a Palestinian state. The two religious parties added, as their own grievance,

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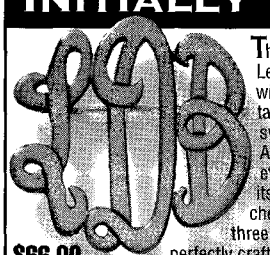

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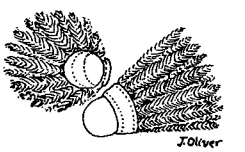
the appointment of Shulamit Aloni as Minister of Education. In the debate prior to the vote, Rabin maintained that the measures he had taken in the Territories were dictated by Israel's economic and social needs, and not, as the opposition charged, by a desire to please the United States. Of the settlements he said, "We do not want them to wither away. This is not our intention. We regard ourselves as responsible for the security and well-being of the residents of the Territories, even should autonomy be instituted." A few Knesset members abstained, including three from the Torah Jewry Party who defied Rabbi Schach, and the motion lost by a margin of fifty-nine to forty-eight.

I had been at the Knesset, and when the vote was over I walked across the street to a grassy park, where about a hundred and fifty people, most of them young, were demonstrating, under a banner that said, in Hebrew, "Israel Is Safe with Tsomet." Some waved blue-and-white Israeli flags. Others carried signs that denounced the cuts in the settlement budget or proclaimed the dangers of trading territory for peace. Raful, Tsomet's leader, arrived a few minutes after I did. A short man with a permanent scowl and a substantial belly, he delivered a brief, barely audible pep talk, which generated a few perfunctory cheers. In all, the gathering was more like a picnic than like a protest. The Jerusalem weather, as is usual late in the day, was clear and cool. Most of the demonstrators, I was told, had come from the Territories on excursion buses. A few local people, having learned of the event, had arrived on their own. No one seemed really disappointed, much less surprised, that Rabin had won the confidence vote.



But when I asked direct questions, circling the edge of the crowd, I heard unmistakable bitterness. "Once you settle the land, it belongs to you. That's what Zionism is about," one man said. Another said, "The people here are expressing their distrust of Rabin. The state authorized these settlements, and invited families to move to them. Now he wants to take them away." A third declared, "Rabin has made an unholy alliance with the Arab Knesset members. Then Shas joined for political favors. The Likud lost because of economic problems and corruption, not because of settlements. This government's settlement policy defies the will of the Israeli people." And still another said, "The Jewish majority wants rule of the entire country to be in Jewish hands. Rabin has no right to give land back to the Arabs. The game is more than settlements; it is about the Land of Israel itself."

One man, a soft-spoken septuagenarian, who said he had migrated from the United States after the Second World War, took what seemed to me a paranoid view, though none of the nearby listeners challenged him. "The Arabs are all P.L.O., and they have infiltrated the Labor Party and Meretz," he said. "They want to push the Jews out of Judea and Samaria and force us into ghettos, where we'll be a perfect target for Syrian or Iraqi Scuds. We won't even have room to bury our dead. Our water comes from Judea and Samaria, and they'll cut it off. Meretz is a party of Jews against Judaism, like the Hasmoneans in Biblical times. They are spies for the P.L.O. Next, they will be demanding autonomy for the Arabs inside Israel. I feel as if I were living in pre-independence Palestine." As he talked, the man reached up to place a friendly hand on my shoulder, revealing a pistol in a holster under his coat.

A little later, I learned that Benny Katzover, a tough-talking leader of Gush Emunim, the religiously inspired hard-right settlers' bloc, was also among the demonstrators. Katzover has an official position—he heads the Regional Council of Samaria, a coördinating body for settlements in the northern part of the West Bank—but he is best known for his threats against Arabs and peacemakers, which are often quoted in the newspapers. I found him standing slightly apart from the crowd, a bearded man wearing sandals and a knitted *kipa* that was held in place by a bobby pin—a style favored by Gush Emunim. His high cheekbones, narrow eyes, and lean body were menacing, yet his manner was cordial.

"This is the beginning of the beginning," he said when I asked him why the demonstration seemed so amiable. "Likud is gone, and the people don't miss it. Even some settlers voted to get rid of it, but don't think that Israel was abandoning the right. The Russians voted for the left, and a few voters

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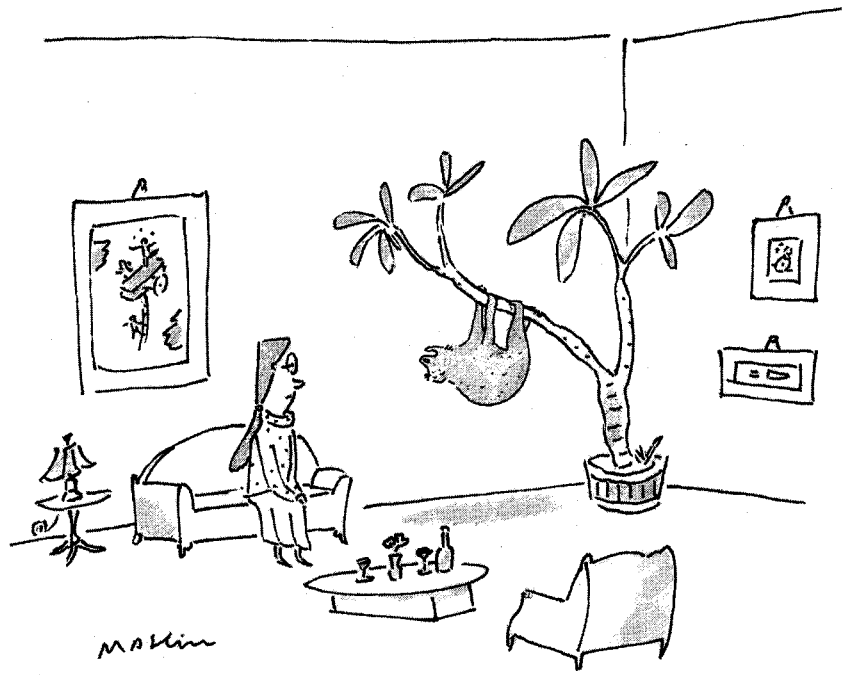
switched from right to left out of disgust for the Likud. But if Rabin tries to railroad an autonomy agreement through, we'll have thousands of protesters in the streets, and we'll do what we have to do. I hope it won't be Jews fighting Jews. If there is violence, it is likely to be against Arabs, particularly if Rabin agrees to an autonomy that imposes their rule on us. If an Arab policeman tries to stop a Jewish settler, we won't stand for it. If an Arab issues a license to build near a Jewish settlement, we won't allow it. We will continue to enlarge our settlements until the Arabs understand that their hope of having a country in the middle of the Land of Israel is a futile dream.

"Whatever Rabin says, the question of sovereignty over this land is not open. The land is ours. We owe the Arabs nothing. They are our enemies, and we will do what we can to pressure them to leave. Until now, there has been no real war against them, either by us or by the Army, even when the intifada was at its peak. But if they do not peacefully accept us we'll have no choice. The only way autonomy can possibly succeed is if the Army, ironically, stays, and intensifies its control of the Territories. Without the Army, an Arab regime can't work. We don't expect to fight the Army, but the soldiers can't be everywhere at once. When they leave, we will act. When they come back, we'll offer them coffee. But under no circumstances will we accept an Arab administration. The settlers will prevent it—we'll open fire and shoot to kill."

Amiram Goldblum was an antidote to Katzover. A chemistry professor at the Hebrew University, Goldblum is in charge of settlement research for Peace Now, Israel's most powerful peace lobby. The task of figuring out settlement expenses is not easy, he told me, because the Shamir government did its best to conceal data. In the Education Ministry, money was passed under the table, he said, but in the Occupied Territories expenditures, legal or not, were hidden in the budgets of dozens of agencies and were almost impossible to trace. Israelis, normally suspicious of government, seemed to close their eyes to abuses in the Territories. Few ever crossed over to see things there for themselves. The reporting of the state-owned television was negligent, and though the newspapers were better, it took five years of the intifada for Israelis to acknowledge that something was amiss.



"I thought you should hear this from me before you heard it from anyone else, Irene. I'm an arboreal tropical American edentate of the family Bradypodidae. In other words, a two-toed sloth."

• •

Goldblum said that Likud had distorted the incentives that were offered to Israelis to settle in the Negev and the Galilee—remote parts of the country—in order to encourage homeownership in West Bank settlements, most of them less than an hour's drive from Jerusalem or Tel Aviv. A buyer could obtain a grant, sometimes equal to half or more of the value of a home, and then finance, with state-supported subsidies, ninety-five per cent of what remained. The government waived most of the purchase tax, plus seven per cent of the buyer's annual income tax. It gave free land to the developer, then built the infrastructure at public expense, reducing the net price of a home from a third to a half of what it would have been elsewhere. The government also built a network of roads to permit residents to travel to and from their settlements without ever coming within range of an Arab stone. The schools received special funds, and even the buses were given extra money. "Leaving ideology aside," Goldblum said, "I cannot imagine any young Israeli couple that would not go to the Territories to live."

Though Likud also provided subsidies to integrate the settlements into Israel's economy, Goldblum said, it still had to boondoggle, by putting half the employed Israelis in the Territories on the state payroll. Goldblum remarked that Katzover denounces the government—he was as savage toward Shamir as he is toward Rabin—while each month picking up his government check. "Our rough estimate is that twenty per cent of the state's nonmilitary budget went to the two per cent of the Israelis who live in the settlements," he said, and he added that Rabin had been slow to reduce the settlers' incentives. "When Israelis no longer find it financially advantageous," he said, "we will learn how many want to move to the Territories, and how many decide to move out."

Yehiel Leiter predicted that more settlers would be arriving, and few would leave. Leiter, a thirty-three-year-old settler who arrived in 1978 from Scranton, Pennsylvania, is a spokesman for the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza, an umbrella organization of municipalities in the Territories. We met in the coffee shop of the Jerusalem Hilton. He disputed virtually all Goldblum's figures, saying that most of the government's incentives to settlers have already been removed, and expenditures in the Territories are currently less than one per cent of the state

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budget. "The figure of twenty per cent is ridiculous," he said. "Peace Now is the best comedy act in town." The settler population, he told me, had doubled since the start of the intifada, when attacks on Jews were running at four thousand a day. Now attacks are down to four hundred a day, he said, and settlement is likely to accelerate.

"The Territories are the heartland of Israel," Leiter said. Theodor Herzl, the founder of Zionism, did not talk about Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Netanya, he said. "For two thousand years, the Jews have talked about returning to this land, and they mean the hills of Judea and Samaria. Rabin can't sell it out to the Americans for loan guarantees. This is our birthright. It can't be measured in money. We'll tighten our belts and take a cut in our standard of living to stay. Israelis understand the importance of this land and think of us as pioneers." (A peacenik friend of mine acknowledged that a decade ago most Israelis admired the settlers as modern-day Zionist pioneers, but, he said, that view had changed, and most now think of them as overreachers, if not as an outright nuisance.)

When I asked Leiter his reaction to Katzover's plans for an armed response to autonomy, he said that such a prospect was a "nightmare," because violence is not the Jewish way of politics. The settlers, he said, had shown great restraint in defending themselves since the intifada, and had received a bad rap from the world press in being stereotyped as "fundamentalist fanatics carrying Uzis." He denied knowing anything about reported death threats to the two Cabinet ministers who had announced the curb on settlement construction. "The problem is that violence begets violence," Leiter said. "People who do not feel protected by their government will respond. If the Arabs keep perpetrating violence against innocents, the settlers will fight back. Unfortunately, I don't think the Arabs will desist."

Having arranged with Leiter to visit a West Bank settlement, I was later joined at the coffee shop by Bob Lang, another ex-American, who is on Leiter's staff. I offered to drive my rental car, but Lang said he preferred his own car, which he had equipped with plastic windows, a fire extinguisher, and a first-aid kit. Our visit was to Psagot, a settlement that lies on a narrow road a few miles north of Jerusalem. Lang pointed out to me that we were travelling on a road with a yellow line down the center, and explained that the Army had painted the line so that visitors would not inadvertently end up in a hostile Arab village. Psagot presented a sharp contrast to the West Bank settlements—assemblages of prefabs and quonset huts—that I visited a decade ago. Like most other settlements today—towns, really, or even cities—Psagot was beautifully designed and sturdily built, with lovely parks and playgrounds, a community center, and streets lined with shade trees and flowers. The houses, built of stone, looked comfortable. Israelis remember that in the early stages of the campaign Shamir boasted of these handsome communities, and had pictures of them shown nightly on television. But later on Rabin used the pictures to illustrate the disparities in government expenditures, and Shamir stopped boasting.

In Psagot, we went first to the town hall, where Yehuda Pinsky, still another ex-American, sits as deputy head of the regional council. Pinsky, who had a pistol on his hip, said that Psagot had a hundred and thirty families, and all of them felt insecure and uncertain about Rabin's intentions, and regularly made jokes—none of them serious, he insisted—about moving back across the green line. The town was tense, he said, and its residents vowed that they would not take lying down any major changes in their way of life. He said they disagreed with Rabin's claim to have a mandate for change, at least in settlement policy, and though they did not contemplate violence, they would do everything legal to fight for their interests.

From the town hall, Pinsky took us to visit Hindy Cohen, an elementary-school teacher with six children, who lived in a small town house nearby. Cohen, who said that the favorable economic terms had persuaded her to move to Psagot, seemed in no way ideological. She said that she was sure Rabin would not "dry out" the settlements (the verb in Hebrew is *yibush*, and it is frequently applied to the withdrawal of the incentives for residency), and that she believed his promise to watch over the settlers. She loves the intimate, small-town atmosphere of Psagot, she said. Still, if the

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government decides, under autonomy, to withdraw the Army, it would change conditions radically. She explained that Psagot, being small, sends many of its children to school at Ofra, a nearby settlement, in a bus with a military guard and a jeep escort. Without the soldiers, Cohen said, her children would be in danger, and it would be impossible for her to remain.

HANAN ASHRAWI, the spokeswoman for the Palestinian delegation to the peace negotiations, lives on the outskirts of Ramallah, just a few miles from Psagot. She shares with her husband and two daughters a modern stone house that is across the road from an Israeli Army headquarters and prison. Ashrawi was born in Ramallah in 1946, into a deeply rooted Christian Arab family. Her father was a doctor who, contrary to custom, gave his five daughters the same education that boys receive, and she ultimately obtained a Ph.D. at the University of Virginia. I first met Ashrawi in 1979, when she was teaching English literature at Birzeit, a privately financed, largely Christian university in a nearby village. I remember her telling me she was writing a novel, and my asking her—rather naïvely, I suppose—whether it was political. She looked at me with the withering smile that has since become familiar to television audiences, and said, "On the West Bank, everything is political."

Ashrawi could no doubt have left the West Bank long ago, as so many Palestinians have. Her home town, which was gracious and sophisticated, even liberal, in her youth, has become, under the impact of refugees from the countryside, poor, overcrowded, and very fundamentalist. Since 1967, much of Ramallah's well-to-do population has left—especially the Christians. In fact, the Christian population, which is the West Bank's most cultivated, is believed to have fallen from fifteen per cent to three since the Six-Day War, and I sometimes wondered why Ashrawi stayed. Recently, I found in my files a pamphlet she wrote at Birzeit in 1976, entitled "Contemporary Palestinian Literature Under Occupation." In it she said of writers, "Such a tremendous responsibility is placed on their shoulders, burdened with the aspirations of a whole nation, that they are no longer free agents or individuals." It seemed to me that there was the answer.

Since I have known Ashrawi, she has made common cause with the West Bank's nationalist mainstream, identified with the P.L.O.; that is, she favors recognition of Israel on the condition that it withdraw from the Territories occupied in 1967, and though she insists on the establishment of a Palestinian state, which will be democratic and secular, she is willing, as a practical matter, to accept autonomy in the Territories during a period of transition. A minority within the P.L.O. wants to bypass autonomy, but it has made no major effort to interfere with the negotiations. The current challenge that Ashrawi and her team face comes from the rising power of the Islamic fundamentalists, under the banner of Hamas—an organization that seems to have won the loyalty of thirty or forty per cent of the population. Hamas calls for an Islamic state and for an intensification of the struggle against the Israelis, with no negotiations at all. For a time, the differences between the partisans of the P.L.O. and Hamas simmered, but in reaction to Rabin's promise of an Israeli-Palestinian agreement the fight has moved to the streets, and both sides have suffered fatalities. It now threatens—though more immediately in the Gaza Strip than on the West Bank—to explode into a Palestinian civil war.

"With Hamas growing stronger, our margin of maneuver is getting narrower and narrower," I was told by Mustafa Barghouti, a doctor who runs a public-health center in an Arab suburb of Jerusalem and serves on the steering committee that helps shape Palestinian negotiating policy. "Saudi Arabia has been supporting Hamas for some time, and recently, we think, Iran has moved in. They are building mosques and clinics, and they provide funds for social welfare, all of which Hamas uses to strengthen its political position. Hamas has no program for dealing with the occupation; it offers only God. We have invited it to participate in our advisory bodies, but it insists on our changing our political line to theirs. Hamas is very secretive, and we're not always sure what it wants, but we know that if negotiations fail, it will have a big popular surge. We are prepared to make concessions to Israel in the negotiations. But if we are pressed too hard, at some point we will have to say, 'We can't

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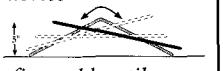

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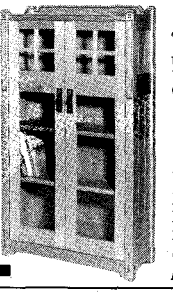

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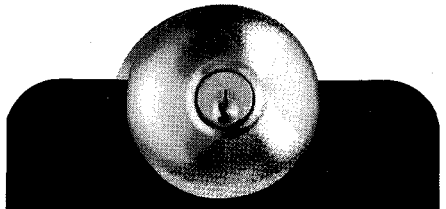

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go on.' Our basic needs do not weaken Israeli security; they have to do with identity and dignity. I hope the Americans and Israel understand this."

Rabin may understand the dilemma of the Palestinians, but, having dilemmas of his own, he may be in a weak position to provide help. He has made an unequivocal commitment to an autonomy agreement, and if he fails, Israelis may not readily forgive him. Knowing this strengthens the Palestinian bargaining position. But Rabin, too, has a point where he must say, "We can't go on." The Palestinians I have listened to say nothing to which the Israeli settlers would agree. The question is whether the Palestinians are prepared to agree to terms that more closely approach the Israeli consensus. Both sides might change in the course of the negotiations. But, as the talks begin, it is not clear that either will make the concessions that are needed to resolve the political dilemma of the other.

"If Israel doesn't want to negotiate over land, then there is nothing to negotiate over," said Salim Tamari, a sociology professor at Birzeit, who is also a member of the steering committee. "The difference between us is that we Palestinians have already made many concessions. We lost half our land with the U.N. partition resolution in 1947, and half of what remained in the war of 1948. Now Rabin, following the lines of the Allon plan, is telling us we have to cut what remains in half again. The difference between us is that Israel can afford to give up the Occupied Territories without giving up the nation, and we cannot afford to give up any more.

"Israel's devolution of the Territories—giving up control, or agreeing on interim measures for retaining control under different terms—is what these negotiations are about. I think the Israeli electorate has voted for devolution. We and they agree now that there should be Arab sovereignty over this territory, though not without an Israeli presence. We are ready to accept Israel's security needs, including demilitarization. We also recognize that a Jewish minority will probably remain on our side, and we can accept that as long as those who choose to stay understand that they will be under Palestinian law, as the Palestinians within Israel are under Israeli law. We and the Israelis both have an interest in safeguarding our people on the other side of the line. In return for devolution, we must grant Israel recognition—acknowledge Israel's international legitimacy—and since all this land is Palestinian it is something no other Arab nation can do."

Ashrawi and I talked in her Ramallah home about what Rabin's election meant for the peace process. We sat in easy chairs in her study, which looks out over the West Bank hills. Nearby was a bookcase containing the works of Chaucer and other medieval British writers, and some volumes on the Crusades—the traces of her academic past. She was, as usual, carefully coiffed, and she wore a light-blue jacket with a pastel flowered skirt, as if in response to writers who have said that her dress was too plain for a woman of international stature. We sipped coffee as we spoke, and she smoked one cigarette after another.

"The Americans have taken to looking too kindly on Israel, now that Labor is in power," she said. "That puts us at a disadvantage. But Rabin hasn't yet done enough on the settlements. He makes a distinction between political and security settlements, which neither we nor the Americans accept. He calls for a freeze, then applies it only to unsigned contracts. He has not done many things within his power, like closing down Ansar II, the camp where thousands of detainees are still held without trial. He has not called off his undercover units or curfews or the practice of arbitrary arrests. Is Rabin slow in getting new orders down the chain of command to the officers in the field, or is there still too mu of Likud in the rule of the Territories? We have not yet seen the image of a leader with a new purpose, tone, and direction. We have the feeling we're getting a smoke screen.

"When Baker was here, he was very positive about the Israeli elections. He tried to tell us how serious the Israelis were, and he asked us to reciprocate with what he called practical proposals. He was pleased by his discourse with Rabin and his reception in Jerusalem. But we have stayed with the peace process for all of the past eight months, though dealing with

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Shamir was a nightmare. We would have liked some recognition ourselves, but it was the Israelis who were rewarded, with the loan guarantees. We know that the Americans are not our patrons. They don't give us billions of dollars every year, or even recognize our state. All we asked of Baker was to slow down and suspend judgment on Rabin for a while. We always foresaw that Labor would be better than Likud at P.R.—but for us this is not a P.R. game. I don't think it's impossible for Rabin to stop *all* the settlements, and *all* the human-rights violations that are still going on.

"We were encouraged, of course, by Rabin's offer to meet at once for negotiations, and to continue negotiating, without a break. Likud had no intention of negotiating at all. But we had hoped to be past the obstacles of the settlements and the human-rights violations by the time we met. We wanted to go right into talks on elections and the self-governing authority. Our plan is on the table. We want the withdrawal of the Army as a start. We propose a total transfer of authority to the Palestinians, with negotiations over the exceptions, basically in the areas of Israeli security. The Palestinians must replace the military government as the source of laws. We know that the settlers don't want any of that, and they have their own military guard, and they all have guns. It's too bad that Israel has created a class of people which defies its laws; now Rabin does not know what to do with those people. If the Army wants to stay and maintain law and order, that's all right with us. But the Army has got to get out of our lives—to end the brutality, violence, and daily intrusion of the occupation. We got into the peace process to end the occupation, not to beautify it."

I remarked to Ashrawi that all the Arab regimes seem to have chosen to stress the dark side of the Rabin government, an attitude that appeared to be a tactical ploy. I asked whether she was not overstating her disappointment, and failing to give credit for positive steps. Like the Palestinians, I said, the Israelis had to take local political pressures into account.

"I don't want to give you the impression that everything is negative," she answered. "We recognize Rabin's political problems. But we disagree on how he is handling them. He was elected on a promise of new priorities, and we feel that he is now catering to Israel's right wing. We have our right-wing extremists, and they are very threatening to us. But we haven't indulged them, and we don't think that Rabin ought to indulge his. I don't feel pessimistic. We are not without powers. We are willing to be reasonable in dealing with the Israelis, and we will acknowledge positive moves, but we must also be realistic. We are now going into the most difficult phase of this process. We're dealing with the fate of our people, and we have to be careful."

The eve of the Washington meeting brought a new problem. When Ashrawi and her team reached the Allenby Bridge, which connects the West Bank with Jordan, Israeli border authorities stopped them on the ground that their papers were not in order. The team returned to Jerusalem and got in touch with the State Department, which has acknowledged that it then had a word or two with the Israelis about liberalizing procedures. Within a day or so, the Palestinians were back on their way.

Just before the delegations met, Rabin made a friendly gesture by announcing the cancellation of a deportation order for eleven Palestinian militants and the early release of eight hundred others who were imprisoned during the intifada. He also said that he had instructed the Israeli delegation to adopt more conciliatory positions than those taken under Shamir. The contending parties—Israel on one side, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and the Palestinians on the other—thus convened on a hopeful note, and after the first day of talks, chiefly concerning procedures, both broke precedent in expressing satisfaction that a new tone had been established. On August 25th, the second day, Israel presented the Palestinians with an autonomy proposal that more or less followed the guidelines set at Camp David in 1978, and the Palestinians accepted it as a major step forward. Neither side claimed that the gulf separating them was about to be closed, but both Palestinians and Israelis conceded publicly that the prospect of agreement between them had never been more promising.

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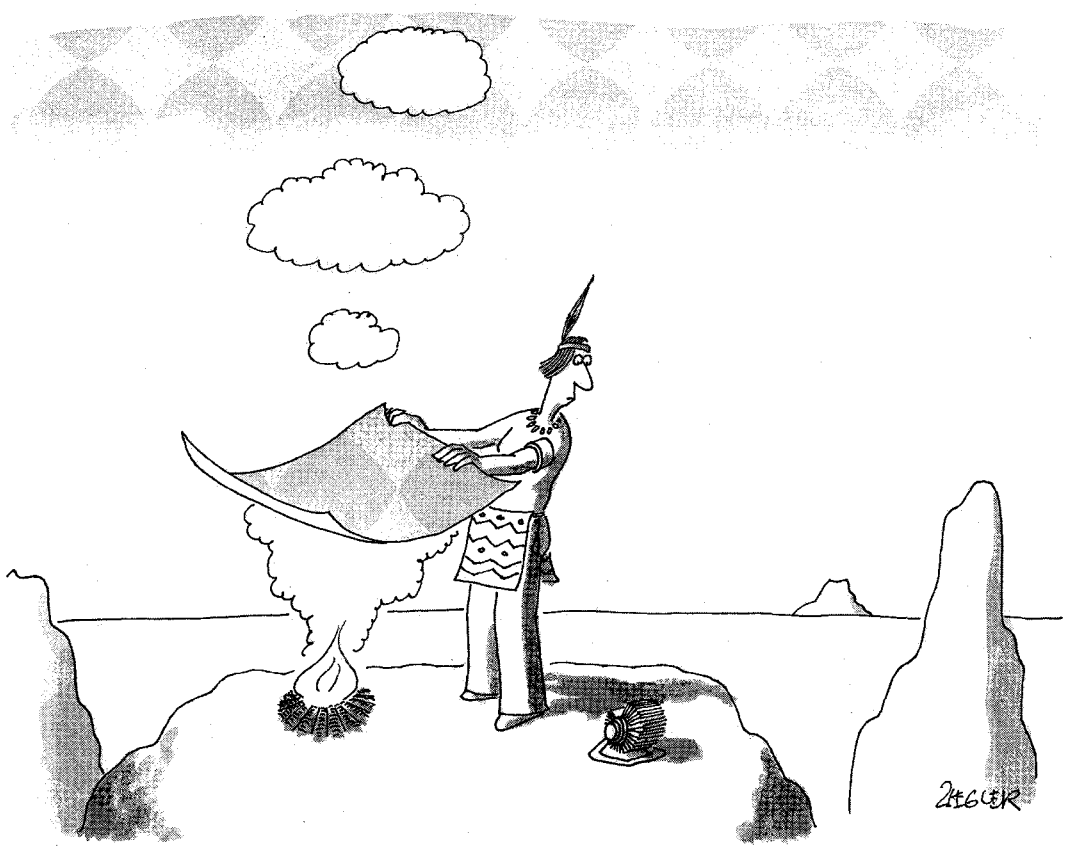
This Land Is His Land

"Bob Roberts," written and directed by Tim Robbins, who also plays the title role, is a mock documentary that chronicles, C-SPAN style, the senatorial campaign of a young radical-right demagogue. Robbins works like an inspired political cartoonist, using outlandish incongruities to set his targets up for the satiric kill. The central incongruity here is that Bob Roberts is a folksinger: instead of giving speeches, he picks up an acoustic guitar and invites his audiences to sing along with his reactionary "protest" anthems. "We are marching for self-interest," they sing, their voices ringing with purity and nobility of purpose, "and we will march forevermore." Bob—who performs with his head tilted slightly upward, as if he were transfixed by a vision of the better world just over the horizon—isn't exactly like any other candidate you've seen, but the essence of his political strategy is instantly, and depressingly, recognizable: he's a master of putting a down-home, populist spin on profoundly undemocratic ideas. The candidate's appropriation and perversion of folk-music forms is a stroke of genius on Robbins' part, a superbly apt metaphor for conservative politicians' cunning manipulations of tone and style in the Reagan-Bush era: it's a logical extension of the morning-in-America, kinder-gentler-nation rhetoric that imparts a glow of idealism and common-man decency to social-Darwinist ideology. Bob Roberts is Pat Buchanan in Woody Guthrie's clothing, and what's scary about the movie is that this grotesque coupling doesn't even feel like a stretch.

It's tempting to imagine Tim Robbins pitching the idea for "Bob Roberts" to a studio executive like the one he played in Robert Altman's "The Player," who didn't mind political movies as long as they weren't "*political* political." If you were to describe this picture in the desperate telegraphic style of the pitch meetings in Altman's movie, you'd have to say something like "It's 'Don't Look Back' meets 'Triumph of the Will.'" (Not surprisingly, Robbins wound up relying on independent financing.) The idea of exploring the life and times of a fascist folkie sounds more like the premise of a "Saturday Night Live" segment (which, in fact, it once was) than like the basis of a feature-length film, but Robbins manages to push his sketch-comedy concept farther than even the most hopeful liberal could have anticipated. The movie sustains its energy and holds our interest right to the end. The central joke never wears thin, because the film keeps inventing new ways for its protagonist to horrify us; by the time it's over, Bob Roberts seems the embodiment of all the evils perpetrated by conservatives over the past twelve years. And Robbins has obviously been paying close attention to the political and cultural scene: he has a long list of grievances, a lot of stored-up frustration about the right's domination of recent American history, and "Bob Roberts" is his chance to have his say on everything that has been bugging him. That's more than enough material to keep him, and us, engaged for a hundred minutes. The movie is essentially an anthology of nasty satiric riffs on current events. What gives it momentum is the force of its anger—an anger that is, unmistakably, *political* political.

In his zeal to demolish at one go the conservative movement's carefully constructed façade of Main Street righteousness, Robbins darts manically from issue to issue, setting comic explosive charges under each one, as if to make certain that the job will be done thoroughly, that no part of the structure will remain standing. The first thing we notice about Bob Roberts is that he's a peerlessly sleazy campaigner, in the state-of-the-art manner developed by Roger Ailes and the late Lee Atwater in 1988: expertly, he alternates misty-eyed pieties about traditional values with scurrilous insinuations about the character of his opponent, Senator Brickley Paiste (Gore Vidal), who is a high-minded elderly liberal in a bow tie. When it's necessary, smiling Bob can also appeal to his audience's racial and social prejudices, or feed its greediest fantasies of material success. And since the movie is taking place in the fall of 1990 he adds a little warmongering to the mixture, expressing his support for military ac-



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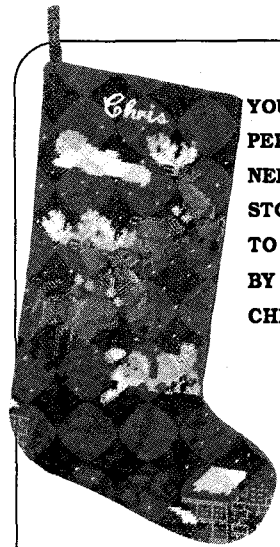
tion against Iraq in a tender, stirring song about the need to do battle with "godless men." He's a great communicator. But, as the movie goes on, Robbins makes it clear that the candidate's rhetorical opportunism and his appalling skill at manipulating his own image aren't Bob Roberts' worst qualities. Gradually, the movie implicates Roberts—whose campaign manager (played by Alan Rickman) is an Oliver North-type covert-action cowboy—in Latin-American drug running and the savings-and-loan scandal, and suggests that his real agenda might be even more unwholesome than his apparent one. Bob Roberts is frightening enough when we think he's just a dangerously attractive reactionary windbag, a hollow man; the true horror dawns on us when we realize that he isn't empty at all, and begin to see exactly what it is he's full of.

Robbins does justice to his own agenda by establishing, and maintaining, a reckless, headlong pace. And the movie, even at its most chilling, is hilarious; its humor is both precise enough to deflate its targets and goofy enough to feel liberating. Robbins' performance has a lot to do with the movie's success. As he demonstrated in "The Player," he has a remarkable talent for portraying yuppie psychopaths, and Bob Roberts—who made a fortune on Wall Street before he became famous for such albums as "The Freewheelin' Bob Roberts" and "Times Are Changin' Back," and who continues to wheel and deal, with computers and phone lines to foreign exchanges, from his campaign bus—is right in his range. Robbins gets huge effects out of small shifts of expression: he turns from amiably boyish to freezingly vicious just by narrowing his eyes a bit or holding his grin a fraction too long. His Bob Roberts is conceived as a caricature, but the performance is never tiresome: it's too finely detailed, and too gleeful. And Robbins has surrounded himself with a company of exuberant comic actors, who help him create the atmosphere of feverish media-culture inanity in which the Roberts campaign is waged. Many of the biggest names in the cast—Susan Sarandon, Fred Ward, Peter Gallagher, Pamela Reed, James Spader, Helen Hunt, Fisher Stevens—do cameos as local-news anchors and reporters, and they all look as if they were having a wonderful time impersonating these natty chuckleheads and parodying their concerned-neighbor personas. (Fred Ward, playing a happy-talk anchorman who succumbs to a giggling fit in the middle of a report on the homeless, is particularly brilliant.) John Cusack and Bob Balaban turn up in a segment devoted to Bob Roberts' appearance on a supposedly hip, youth-targeted variety show called "Cutting Edge Live," a devastating sequence that's designed to reveal how dull and unthreatening the "cutting edge" stance of shows like "Saturday Night Live" really is. It's the key scene in "Bob Roberts"—the climactic expression of Robbins' disgust with his own generation, his contempt for its readiness to adopt rebellious poses and its unwillingness to rebel in any way that actually matters.

Bob Roberts has acquired the style of Woody Guthrie and Bob Dylan and merged it with right-wing ideology, and that deal amounts to a hostile takeover of a great tradition of skepticism and dissent. Maybe the most succinct representation of Roberts' weaselliness is his performance, in one of the film's Nuremberg-hootenanny sequences, of a song that paraphrases Guthrie's most famous composition: Bob's song ends with the triumphant line "This land was made for *me*," and the crowd rises to its feet. At moments like that, "Bob Roberts" achieves a dizzying kind of cultural irony. Robbins falters only when he tries to switch from the fierce destructive satire that characterizes most of the picture to a more edifying tone. When saintly Senator Paiste faces the camera and expounds his theories of American government (Vidal reportedly improvised his own lines in these sequences), the movie goes dead—even if you agree with the character's sentiments. And Robbins has invented an alternative-press investigative journalist, Bugs Raplin (played, overbearingly, by Giancarlo Esposito), who digs up dirt on the Roberts campaign and gets martyred for his efforts; before Bugs goes down for the last time, he delivers an elaborate diatribe on the "secret government," and the murk of Oliver Stone-style paranoia momentarily descends on the picture. The final scene is a shockingly banal piece of uplift: the



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documentary filmmaker (Brian Murray), disillusioned with his subject, gazes up at the Jefferson Memorial and—presumably—reflects on what has become of the Jeffersonian ideal of democracy.

I didn't much mind the flaws; I saw "Bob Roberts" on the morning after the last night of the Republicans' multimillion-dollar bash in Houston, so I was probably in an unusually receptive mood. In a way, the feebleness of Robbins' occasional attempts to take the high road in "Bob Roberts" made me appreciate the low-road comic savagery of the rest of the picture all the more. At its best, the movie is a down-and-dirty exercise in negative campaigning, and it's bracing to see some mean, memorable zingers coming from the left. In return for the right's appropriation of the rhetoric of populism and idealism, Robbins, wittily, has assumed for his side the attack-dog aspect of the conservatives' campaign style. And he has made a terrifically entertaining movie. "Bob Roberts" represents something that's more unlikely than its title character's right-wing sing-alongs, and a lot more welcome: liberal humor with sharp teeth. —Terrence Rafferty

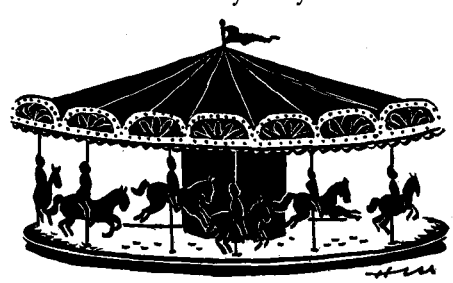
Free to Be Elvis

"Honeymoon in Vegas" is a comic zephyr: it tickles the back of your neck as it whisks by. This ninety-five-minute screwball idyll zigs and zags from New York to Las Vegas to Hawaii as Nicolas Cage and Sarah Jessica Parker lurch from the brink of matrimony to splitsville. Cage, a private eye, has a commitment problem: in the opening scene, his mother (Anne Bancroft), on her deathbed, makes him promise that he'll never marry, since no one will ever love him as much as she does. But Parker, a second-grade teacher and a knockout, is hard to resist. So when she finally delivers a marital ultimatum they hop a plane to Vegas. That's where Fate, or maybe Bancroft's ghost, intervenes. James Caan, a pro gambler, immediately sees Parker as the image of his beloved late wife. He lures the would-be groom into a welcome-to-Vegas poker game that leaves him with a sixty-five-thousand-dollar loss. The only option Cage has for wiping out his debt is to let Caan spend the weekend with Parker, mostly at Caan's house in Hawaii. The movie is about learning how much you want something just when it looks as if you might lose it forever. It's also a diverting expression of clashing generational styles. Cage is a nineties boy-man who can't cut the apron strings even after mama is gone. Caan is the traditional manly man who's *too* willing to take on responsibility. No wonder Parker is puzzled.

Vamping on detective stories and gambling movies and crazy comedies of the past, the writer-director, Andrew Bergman, makes antic hay out of contemporary confusion. Bergman has a knack for developing narrative momentum as his characters strive to reach a happy equilibrium. It's weirdly right that the music of Elvis Presley comments on the action, not only in a Vegas overrun with Elvis impersonators but in Kauai, too. (A succession of contemporary stars, as well as Elvis himself, sing some of the King's biggest hits; Willie Nelson croons "Blue Hawaii.") America's pop god of self-creation belongs in a movie about lovers bopping their way to the altar by trial and error.

Cage's amorous anxiety gives "Honeymoon in Vegas" a charge; at the apex of panic, he both erupts and implodes. This is his best performance to date. With his long face, big frame, and hangdog eyes, he's as easy to read as an oversized cartoon character—every shift in his desire and chagrin registers. At times, he's Goofy with a sex drive. But he also betrays an underlying sheepishness and melancholy, and a sense of nagging incompleteness. You root for him to win Parker back and set up a full life.

But the movie is so balanced that many viewers will cheer for Caan. The gambler he plays here is the opposite of the one he portrayed in "The Gambler." He's a ruthless businessman, not a compulsive risk-taker, and his confidence rests on keeping an impeccably organized home. Although Elvis is the movie's guiding spirit, Caan is more in the Sinatra mold: his theme could be "My Way." From the moment he steps into Bally's Casino and Resort and demands his usual suite, this guy demonstrates that he isn't afraid of grabbing an enemy's throat or crotch. Later, as he comes on to Parker, Caan proves how good he is at turning on the charm. When Parker, numbed and distrustful, sits down with him at Bally's, he italicizes his expressions in order to get through to her—his raised finger and wide-open eyes form skewed exclamation points. To some extent, Caan never stops italicizing. He sums up generations of male hubris: he wants to give Parker the impression that his extroverted brand of caring is fuelled by an essential, mystical need to wed and protect her. Parker is a great listener and an all-around *responder*. She transforms the character's vulnerability and perplexity into a kind of bemused sultriness. She's so keen on marital bliss (and so burned by Cage) that she's willing to consider Caan's marriage proposal. This romantic triangle spins like a gyroscope.



Bergman, who wrote and directed "The Freshman" and co-wrote "Soapdish" (two of the few entertaining comedies so far this decade), has a refreshing satirical grasp of our native eclecticism. His affection for melting-pot America should be savored when cultural polarization is on the rise. Bergman has always enjoyed pastiche; even his published Ph.D. thesis—"We're in the Money," a social study of thirties movies—is a bit of a potpourri. Before he began directing, he collaborated on the script for Mel Brooks' hellzapoppin' Western, "Blazing Saddles," and wrote the C.I.A. spoof "The In-Laws." He is also the author of two clever novels about a private eye named Jack LeVine, "The Big Kiss-Off of 1944" and "Hollywood and LeVine," which gave the conventions of Chandleresque detective stories a New York Jewish accent and mixed tough-guy derring-do with a wised-up view of forties politics and real historical personalities like Thomas Dewey and Richard Nixon. His directorial début, "So Fine" (1981), blends parodies of academia, the garment industry, the Mob, and opera; in "The Freshman," a film student from Vermont becomes an aide to the Godfather and winds up colliding with his stepfather, an obsessed animal-rights activist.

In "Honeymoon in Vegas," it's clear

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that Bergman is drawn to pastiche not just as a form but as the American way of life. Each character carries a risible mélange of influences—like Kauai's native honcho, Chief Orman (Peter Boyle), who turns out to be a show-tune addict. Of course, Elvis has been cropping up everywhere, from political addresses to Hanif Kureishi's "London Kills Me." The reason he's such a gas in "Vegas" is that Bergman understands why he's the King of American Pop. The Flying Elvises (Utah chapter), a skydiving troupe that gives Cage a big assist, aren't mere figures of fun—they're euphoric daredevils. When Cage's character puts on a Flying Elvis costume, it's like a secular bar mitzvah: at last, he becomes his own man.

ERROL MORRIS has joked that in "A Brief History of Time," his inspirational documentary essay about the physicist Stephen Hawking, he "made a movie in which everyone is smarter than me." Another attraction may have been aesthetic. In his highly acclaimed "The Thin Blue Line" Morris showed how much he likes to isolate his human subjects, the better to conceptualize about them. And in Hawking, who works from a wheelchair equipped with a computerized voice simulator, Morris has found a hero who couldn't be more alienated from his physical environment. The result is a marriage made in limbo. Even more abstract than it has to be, and remarkably soft-edged, the movie is a cross between a puff piece and a gee-whiz science special. In the biographical sections, Morris sketches Hawking as a wayward boy wonder who focusses his talents only after he's stricken with Lou Gehrig's disease. As far as characterization goes, that's it. There's some curiosity but no depth in the director's depiction of eccentric British intellectuals; he treats his interviewees as if he were pinning them to specimen boards, except that he doesn't name or identify them. Hawking's wife functions in the narrative as his savior. Morris doesn't mention that the marriage recently broke up. (Hawking's wife, his lover, and his three children don't appear in the film.) And the director is incredibly polite about academic rivalry. Compared with the flesh-and-blood competitors in Mick Jackson's "The Race for the Double Helix," Morris's scientists are artificial intelligences.

As a record of inquiry into black holes and how they relate to the creation of the cosmos, "Time" is one "Eureka!" episode after another. "One evening shortly after the birth of my daughter, Lucy," Hawking says, "I started to think about black holes as I was getting into bed. . . . Suddenly, I realized that the area of the event horizon always increases with time." There are the inevitable setbacks—at one juncture, Hawking admits, he was "using too simple a model of the universe"—but somehow they, too, redound to his credit. Morris contributes some funny touches, such as a portrait of a cosmic chicken and a clip from the Walt Disney flop "The Black Hole." But he presents Hawking's ironic contrasts between human mortality and the life span of the universe with such hushed awe that he robs them of their delectability. (The familiar ripple of Philip Glass's music doesn't help.) The movie ends with Hawking's statement that finding the answer to why the universe exists "would be the ultimate triumph of human reason—for then we would know the mind of God." By then, however, the film has disappeared into its own cranium.

—MICHAEL SRAGOW

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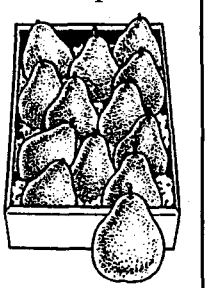
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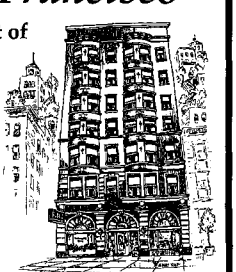
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LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

AUGUST 27

HOWEVER cynically and irresponsibly, George Bush and the Republican Convention sought to get the President out of a corner and redefine the Presidential campaign. Before the Convention, Bill Clinton was running ahead in the polls by about twenty points, and his campaign had defined the contest in terms of "change" versus the status quo, youth and energy versus idea fatigue. Some time ago, Bush's closest advisers—especially James Baker—recognized that it was illogical for an incumbent President (and two-term Vice-President) to run as an "agent of change." Bush had started down that road earlier this year, using the word "change" nineteen times in one speech. Gradually, and very much with Baker's help, the Bush campaign was shifted to the question of "Who do you trust" to govern in the next four years. This question was—had to be—given salience through attacks on Clinton's character, of which there were many at the Convention, several of them fair enough, some of them foul. (There were stiff arguments within the Bush campaign over the wisdom of attacking Hillary Clinton.) The second redefinition the Bush camp gave the campaign was that Clinton wants to raise taxes and Bush wants to lower them. This theme was established through Bush's offering an undefined proposal to cut taxes, to be paid for by undefined means. But in his acceptance speech Bush failed to do what so many—including his own advisers—thought he had to do: make it clear that he understands the economic worries and fears about the future that disturb a great many Americans, and set forth his priorities for a second term. The fact that Clinton's priorities are unclear, too—a matter that continues to distress his advisers—gave Bush an opening, but he failed to seize it. The rest of the campaign will be a struggle for definition.

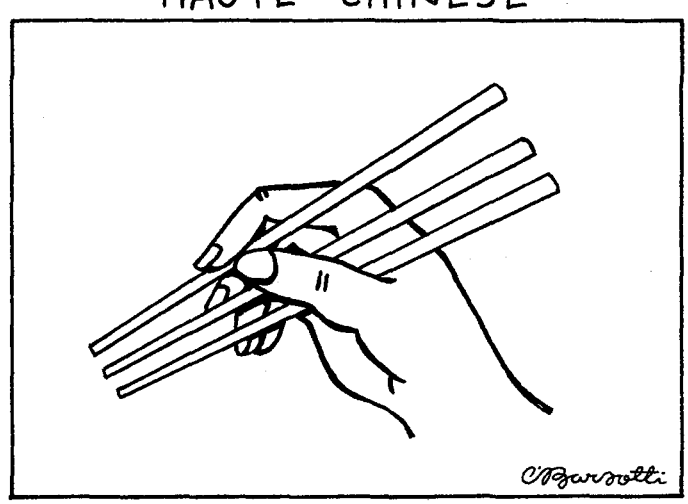
The Republican Convention in Houston was a joyless affair. Republicans gathered with the expectation that Bush would lose the election, taking many of them down with him, and they had become so accustomed to being in power that this prospect was very unnerving. No incumbent President had been as far behind in the polls at that point as Bush was and then gone on to win. A great many of the delegates had never loved Bush, but had resignedly accepted him as Reagan's heir. Until quite recently, he had been running a listless and directionless campaign. His breaking of his 1988 pledge to not raise taxes remained unforgivable in the eyes of many conservatives. (A more adept politician would have either slid out from the pledge without too much fuss or convinced people that breaking the pledge was worth the price in reducing the deficit. The deal did impose spending restraints that Congress has observed.) Bush's apologizing in March for breaking the pledge only made matters worse, saying as he did that what was wrong with it was that people had criticized the move. ("Anytime you get hammered on something, I guess you want to redo it.") And his saying in his acceptance speech that he had "made a bad call . . . with my back against the wall" didn't exactly portray a strong leader. (The idea, says a campaign official, was to try to offset predictable mockery of his 1988 "read my lips" line.) In the course of the four-day Convention, the delegates seemed to be going through the motions, painting by the numbers. Though Bush's acceptance speech had them roaring (egged on by the orchestrated chants of young Republicans which punctuated many of the speeches), one still saw little joy.

There was a meanness to much that went on in Houston. One sensed it right away, and the feeling didn't let up. The dominant characteristic of much of what was said and done was intolerance. "The party of Lincoln," as a few people still termed it, presided over by a man who likes to think of himself as open-minded and decent and generous of spirit, was, with his complaisance, anything but. In the week before the Convention began, the Bush forces, fearful about his precarious political situation, had capitulated to the forces of the "Christian right"—who claimed to make up forty per cent of the delegates—on subject after subject in the platform. Bush was coming to the Convention without even having secured the support of his "base," the conservative right—a matter that should have long since been taken care of.

The Bush people took the attitude that it didn't really matter what was in the platform. Bush said in a television interview aired on the first evening of the Convention that he hadn't read it. Mrs. Bush said in an interview that abortion should not have been in the platform. These statements were probably not off-the-cuff. Bush and Dan Quayle also said, in separate interviews, that if their granddaughter or daughter became pregnant and wanted an abortion they would counsel against it but would support her decision. (Mrs. Quayle sharply corrected her husband the next day.) Bush's reply when he was asked if he thought, then, that this was the woman's decision—"Who else's could it be?"—put him in flat opposition to the platform, and even to his own position on the issue. (He's had several.) Either he forgot himself, which is unlikely, or all these little incidents were the start of the considerable amount of two-stepping that would go on during the Convention.

The platform was both highly conservative and highly intrusive into people's lives, came down hard against homosexuals, same-sex marriages, pornography, and secular humanism, contained a flat ban on abortion (as the 1988 platform did), and called on state legislatures "to explore ways to promote marital stability." This inconsistency doesn't bother many

HAUTE CHINESE



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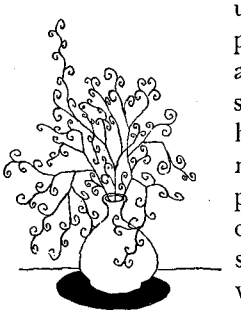
conservatives—but it does divide them from the libertarians in the Party, not to mention what remains of the moderate wing. The Evangelicals wouldn't permit Administration language that referred to a "Faustian" bargain. The late Lee Atwater's view that the Party should be a "big tent" on abortion so as not to drive away moderates and independents didn't have a chance at this Convention. And the platform contributed to the sense of grimness as the Convention got under way.

There was in the Convention hall—the huge Astrodome, with Teutonic faux-marble pillars rising high behind the podium—a strong sense of "us versus them," a division of America into those who shared the views of the faction that dominated the Convention and those who did not. These differences weren't over the kind of governmental issues that Conventions used to be about: tariffs, defense, farm policy, and the like. They were over what the Party chose to term "family values." On the first day of the Convention, Rich Bond, the Party chairman, said in a television interview, "We are America. These other people are not America." Patrick Buchanan's belligerent speech on the opening night fitted right in with this mood, as well as with Buchanan's own temperament. Since it appealed to Buchanan's constituency—that part of the right which Bush still needed—it was looked upon as helpful by the Convention managers. Buchanan, who often goes over the line of civility, and would be an alarming national leader, showed his tendency to bully by bashing homosexuals (this isn't new with him), deriding the Democrats as "pro-lesbian and pro-gay," and accusing Hillary Clinton of espousing "radical feminism." (He misrepresented some legal articles she wrote during the seventies.) Buchanan's statements that "there is a religious war going on in our country. . . . It is a cultural war" discomfited even many of the people in the hall. In those wars Buchanan placed "Clinton and Clinton" on one side and George Bush on the other. In his reference to the Los Angeles riots—which were seldom, if ever, mentioned by the leaders of either party (except in Jack Kemp's speech)—Buchanan placed the solution in the hands of military troopers carrying M-16s. He concluded, "And as those boys took back the streets of Los Angeles, block by block, my friends, we must take back our cities, and take back our culture, and take back our country."

Republican moderates—what's left of them—were dismayed by the proceedings. They were disturbed by the takeover of the platform by the forces on the right, and discouraged by Bush's collusion. Richard Rosenbaum, the former chairman of the New York State Republican Party, said to me, "Every time I come to one of these things, I think it's worse—and it *is* worse." He and other moderates, including William Weld, the governor of Massachusetts, who as of now (these things can be ephemeral) rates the label "rising star," were talking about forming a moderate force to have more strength at the next Convention, but moderates have been talking about this every four years for a long time.



Since the early nineteen-seventies, the Republican Party has searched for—and found—"wedge" issues to divide the Democrats. In 1972, it was "amnesty, acid, and abortion." Over the years, the wedge issues have carried with them more than a tinge of racism—"crime in the streets," busing—and in 1988, of course, Bush hit the jackpot by running on the "issues" of the Pledge of Allegiance (lots of flag factories) and Willie Horton. "Family values" is the ultimate wedge issue, since it conjures up homosexuality, loose morals, schools giving out condoms, premarital sex, marital infidelity, homosexual marriage. That some of these things bother large numbers of people is what makes them effective wedge issues. The family-values issue also conjures up an America for which there is great nostalgia—the America that Barbara Bush described in her speech to the Convention when she spoke of the Bushes' life in Midland, Texas: a small town where everyone looked after his neighbors and, implicitly, there was no crime, and no immigrants or racial tensions. "Family values" is in part a reëvocation of the "Morning in America" theme of Ronald Reagan's 1984 campaign. It appeals to the American myth, something people would like to—but can't—get back to.

Uncoincidentally, it's also a handy theme to use against Clinton, evoking his admitted extramarital activities. Several Convention planners told me beforehand that efforts would be made to re-raise the doubts that people had had about Clinton earlier in the year. The Convention officials had made it sound as if it would all be very subtle, but subtlety isn't these people's long suit. They wouldn't raise the issue of sex, they solemnly vowed—for one thing, it might backfire—but Clinton's avoidance of the draft and his lack of candor in talking about it were fair game. Most of the speakers who brought up the draft didn't make much point of Clinton's questionable stories (for example, his saying he had forgotten he had received an induction notice), but the Bush campaign, as planned, started in on that this week. And the subject of Clinton's infidelity was brought up time and again: in the Convention hall implicitly and suggestively but also unmistakably; outside the hall by Party figures, some of whom thenceforth—having put the subject out there—apologized, or took it back. This was a quite noticeable pattern. Even Mrs. Bush, who offset her carefully tended grandmotherly image with barbed comments all week, said in an interview with reporters before the Convention, "He never denied having a fling, did he?"

Wednesday night—"family-values night"—Mrs. Bush, who is far more popular than her husband, summed up the confusion over just what was meant by "family values" by saying, "However you define family, that's what we mean by family values." Others weren't so flexible. Marilyn Quayle—who preceded Mrs. Bush that night, and was speaking at her own request—gave a harsh speech, full of resentment and anger. It was odd that the ticket had to trot out its women to make its case, and one could only imagine what the Republicans would have made of it if Hillary Clinton had addressed the Democratic Convention. Charging into some of the most sensitive questions of our time, Mrs. Quayle sharply drew the contrast between her career decision and Hillary Clinton's by pointing out that she had given up her law practice when her husband went into politics. (But she did practice while raising young children.) Mrs. Bush, of course, represented those women of her generation—most of them—who

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never sought a career. Actually, Mrs. Quayle at first considered practicing law after her husband became Vice-President (it was decided there would be too many conflicts of interest), and there was even talk of her running for his Senate seat. She plays a very large role in her husband's job—maintaining an office at the Old Executive Office Building, next to the White House, going over his appointment schedule and getting into political and policy matters (Quayle's staff fears her)—and has shown some anger about her offstage role.

Referring at least in part to the Clintons, Mrs. Quayle said that not everyone of their generation "demonstrated, dropped out, took drugs, joined in the sexual revolution, or dodged the draft." She went on to say that liberals are "disappointed because most women do not wish to be liberated from their essential natures as women," and added, "We learned that commitment, marriage, and fidelity are not just arbitrary arrangements." It was a chilling speech that one could only watch with discomfort. That Mrs. Quayle would want to bring up the draft, given the grief her husband had endured four years ago for having joined the Indiana National Guard, was also surprising, but the Quayle faction thinks that that issue is dead, and Quayle himself says that the difference between his story and Clinton's is that "I wore the uniform for six years. I chose to serve my country. Bill Clinton chose not to."

Also on Wednesday night, Pat Robertson told the Convention that Clinton has "a radical plan to destroy the traditional family and transfer many of its functions to the federal government."

The pounding of Clinton continued through Labor Secretary Lynn Martin's speech that night nominating Bush, and up through Bush's acceptance speech. Martin, in a snorter of a speech, pointed out that Bush, who enlisted in the Navy when he turned eighteen and saw combat service in the Second World War, "did not run from responsibility then"—unlike a certain other person—"and will not now." Martin's most effective line, repeated again and again, was "You cannot be one kind of man and another kind of President."

William Bennett, the former Secretary of Education and "drug czar," and a man not without his own Presidential ambitions, stated the "wedge" themes in a clear enough way: "Family values represent a great dividing line between the parties." On he went down the list: "We believe that our nation's public schools should not be doing things like handing out condoms to our children"; "We believe that our government should not subsidize pornography and obscenity." Like some of the speakers before him, Bennett wove into the family-values issue the question of whether the government should give parents vouchers to send their children to private as well as public schools. This gets to the sensitive question of federal aid to religious schools, which, whatever the merits, appeals to Catholics and other religious groups that maintain schools—as the Bush Administration well understood when it first proposed its "choice" program. Like many who talk about "family values," Bennett was onto some real enough things—as when he said "our culture has become increasingly coarse"—but he took them and made them a partisan matter. Saying, "Within very broad limits people may live as they wish," Bennett presented himself as more tolerant than Buchanan, though Bennett, too, is a belligerent man. He added that marriage is far more preferable, and referred to "assault and caricature" from "the adversary culture" against "those who candidly speak out on behalf of these matters." Saying just the reverse of what was the case, Bennett argued, "We are not using code words. We are not seeking a political wedge issue."

Bennett was providing an intellectual underpinning for the family-values issue. In speaking out against promiscuity and saying, "We believe, as well, that more of our children should have the opportunity to be raised with fathers in their lives," he was saying nothing very different from what Jesse Jackson or Marian Wright Edelman, the president of the Children's Defense Fund, would say, but in this context Bennett was exploiting prejudice. Though occasional lip service was paid throughout the speech to mothers who—either because they have no husband or the husband can't bring in enough money to support the family—have to work, there was little room for these people at this Convention. (For whatever reason, sixty-seven per cent of mothers with children under eighteen work outside the home.) People had reason to wonder just what the message was that the Convention was trying to send: the more tolerant message of Barbara Bush or the judgmental one of Marilyn Quayle; the inclusionary messages in the speeches of Ronald Reagan and Jack Kemp or the exclusionary one of Patrick Buchanan. Reagan's silky and good-humored, if well-worn, words at the end of Monday night were a balm, coming, as they did, after so much harsh rhetoric. But Reagan, too, had cultivated the religious right, as well as some of the other intolerant strains of Republicanism (his record on race was less than stellar), and given them political standing. It was possible, as some observers suggested, that the Convention was being deliberately duplicitous. In any event, there was a fair amount of hypocrisy. One curious aspect of the first three days of the Convention was that there was so little talk about the economy, the subject that most worries the voters. When questioned about this, Convention managers said to wait until the President gave his acceptance speech on Thursday night.

THE effort to bring back the Republican base accounted for much of the rhetoric both before and during (and, as it turns out, after) the Convention. Solidifying that base—belatedly—was the first order of business. On the last day of the Convention, Bush-Quayle campaign chairman Robert Teeter told a group of reporters that the Bush campaign was behind schedule in securing the base, and also was "a little weaker now than we'd like to be among young voters." Another official told me just before the Convention began that of the forty-odd per cent of the people who had identified with the Republican Party in the past, some ten to fifteen per cent still weren't with Bush. Conservative white males who should have been with Bush were, of all things, with Clinton. About ten per cent of the traditional Republicans, he said, were still parked with Ross Perot, who remains on the ballot in thirty-eight states (and may well get qualified in all the rest) and is still teasing the public about whether or not he will seek votes, or try to influence the outcome, this fall. If former Bush supporters stay with Perot, that's trouble for Bush; if they go back to Bush,

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that's trouble for Clinton. If Perot received ten per cent of the vote—or even five or less—in a close election, he could tip the balance in several states.

Before the Convention began, Party Chairman Bond, normally a sensible man, gave a speech in which he said, "I for one do not want Jane Fonda sleeping in Abraham Lincoln's bed, and attending as guest of honor a state dinner for Fidel Castro." Bond also took out after Hillary Clinton, saying that she would be "one of those people, along with others, who are going to help him raise taxes and help him increase spending." After he was publicly chastised by Barbara Bush for attacking Hillary Clinton, Bond said that he was simply criticizing Mrs. Clinton as an adviser to her husband. Later, Barbara Bush backtracked, stating in an interview with Judy Woodruff, of "The MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour," that when she chastised Bond she hadn't realized that the Clintons had talked about themselves as a "co-Presidency." (The Clintons haven't actually said that; early in the campaign Bill Clinton, when people praised Hillary, as they often did, was wont to say, "Vote for me and you get her, too.") In that interview, Mrs. Bush departed from her customary public form and virtually hectored Woodruff for asking questions about her reaction to some of the things that had been said during the Convention.

The Convention planners believed that many of the same points that appealed to the base—particularly the contrast with Clinton—would also attract other voters, but they miscalculated the effect of all the "family values" talk and the scary rhetoric. The Bush campaign is working hard on Catholics—with whom the Southern Baptist ticket of Clinton and Al Gore has run into difficulty; Catholics are particularly important for the margin they can provide in the key industrial states, where the election battle will be mainly fought. (In those states, the Bush campaign has begun to draw attention to the fact that Gore's book, "Earth in the Balance," calls for higher miles-per-gallon standards for automobiles, which the automobile industry says would cost jobs because foreign cars already have higher miles-per-gallon standards.) But just before the Convention began, an official also acknowledged to me that in order to win back the necessary independents, ticket-splitters, conservative Democrats, and even some Republicans, Bush had to make clear his view of the country and where he wants to take it. Focus-group studies had indicated that these voters didn't think Bush had a sense of the anxiety that people have about the economy and the future—that "he doesn't get it." The campaign's polling also found that people didn't know that Bush had made proposals on the subjects of education and health care (such as they were); when they were told that he had, their support for him went up by fifteen or twenty per cent. (Most of Bush's economic program was actually approved by Congress, but because Congress added a tax hike on the wealthy, Bush vetoed the legislation. In fact, Bush proudly vetoed a lot of legislation.) So, numerous Convention speakers had been instructed to talk about Bush's proposals and to criticize the Congress—an easy target—for not passing them. Thus, the Congress-bashing, on the part of Bush as well as the leadup speakers, was not so much for the purpose of attacking Congress in itself as for announcing to the world that Bush had, in fact, asked for things. One Bush adviser told me that, though Bush had recently read David McCullough's fine new biography of Harry Truman, his strategy of Congress-bashing wasn't the same as Truman's, because in Truman's case "there was a more clear-cut understanding of what he'd proposed." Bush's problem was a circular one: he isn't very interested in domestic policy and doesn't like to haggle with Congress over it (ringing up a foreign leader is much more satisfying), so even after he is inclined for one reason or another (often the polls) to propose something, he sort of drops it in the hopper and keeps moving—and then becomes irritated that people don't think he has a domestic policy.

WHILE the Convention was under way, so was the transition to the new team, headed by Baker, that would take over the Bush White House and the reëlection campaign. The change had been long in the making—perhaps too long—since Bush was reluctant to have to ask his old friend and sometime rival, and Baker had come to enjoy being Secretary of State. But Bush was in so much trouble that neither man had much choice. And Baker, the

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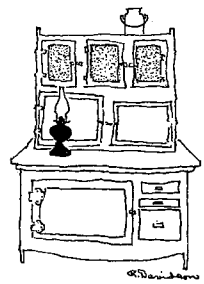
Houdini of politics, who never gets caught near a disaster, wouldn't be blamed if Bush lost, as he was in such parlous shape when Baker took over. (Baker and his entourage would see to that.) Bush's second chief of staff, Sam Skinner, was badly miscast, and, in effect, both the campaign organization and the White House staff were headless blobs, holding a lot of meetings and taking forever to reach a decision, and giving the President little help. (All these people were Bush's choices.) An Administration official told me before the Convention, "There were so many snafus that over time the President had less and less confidence about who was in the audience, was the speech any good, why was the advance work screwed up." Baker was the one man who could impose focus and discipline on both Bush and his reëlection campaign. By returning as chief of staff, he could control Bush's schedule and the substance of his acts, domestic and foreign. He could make and enforce decisions—something none of Bush's other advisers could do. Baker is essentially an unsentimental man (he surprised many by choking up at the end of his farewell speech to State Department workers), very tough and also cynical. (The essence of the 1988 campaign has to be attributed to him—and to Bush. Lee Atwater provided a useful target, but Bush and Baker could have told him at any time to cut it out.) Baker is a big believer in "comparative" campaigning: keeping up the attack on the opponent.



There was a sort of cleanout at the White House—Skinner had stacked up layers of aides—as Baker returned with his remarkably smart and loyal coterie of advisers from the State Department. Some of Baker's inner circle urged him to demand as part of the price for his return that Dan Quayle be dropped from the ticket. The group bandied about the names of Baker, Defense Secretary Dick Cheney, and Colin Powell as a replacement for Quayle. (Teeter was in on the exercise of seeing if Quayle could be replaced.) The precise nature of any conversations on this subject between the President and Baker (who had opposed Quayle four years ago) isn't known, but it did become clear to Baker's advisers that Bush would remove Quayle only if Quayle requested it. Bush's reasons aren't mysterious (even if his judgment is): Quayle had been loyal; removing him would be admission of a mistake; the conservatives, whom Quayle had carefully cultivated, were already angry with Bush, so dropping Quayle might have been more trouble than it was worth (there was a division of opinion on this); it would also look like an act of panic. Nevertheless, in midsummer there was a lot of swirling about here as various congressional Republicans, especially senators, and outside conservatives agitated for Quayle's removal. The public's verdict on him as not up to the Presidency was clear, and, despite the truism that people vote for the top of the ticket, the question of Quayle's competence to be President, and Bush's age (sixty-eight), has placed more attention than usual on the Vice-Presidency, and in a close election Quayle's drag on the ticket could be costly. But Dan and Marilyn Quayle weren't interested in making any sacrifices, and, as some of Quayle's advisers saw it, leaving the ticket could have meant the end of his political career. To raise the ante, word was put about by Quayle's associates that if Quayle was to go, so should Budget Director Richard Darman and Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady, whom conservatives held responsible for the dread tax increase. Quayle apparently made a couple of passing "If you want me to go, I'll go" offers to Bush, who turned him down. Thereupon Quayle and his people told the press that the subject was closed.

QUAYLE's acceptance speech, on Thursday night, was just right for the people in the Convention hall, for Quayle was able to cast himself as the martyr—to all the forces that the delegates had been whipped up in the preceding days to hate. Quayle identified his own (unspecified) "critics" as those who "don't like our values." He said, melodramatically, "I stand before you . . . unbowed, unbroken, and ready to keep fighting for our beliefs." Quayle's critics, some of whom come from within his own ranks, aren't concerned with his beliefs. Quayle is a nice guy—good-humored and remarkably resilient. One hears stories of times he came up with a smart strategy in the inner councils. His puppylike demeanor has real appeal, but it's hard to picture him in the Oval Office. He just can't acquire gravitas. Every time he seems to have steadied himself, he does something that turns him into a joke again. That's why his urging a young spelling-bee contestant to add an "e" to "potato" was so devastating. (Quayle's cue card had the "e.")

To his credit, Quayle has shown no signs of bitterness over the beating he has taken (most particularly from the late-night-television comedians), and has remained—at least outwardly—good-humored. (Marilyn Quayle is another story.) In his speech, Quayle attached himself to "family values," and said that it was on behalf of family values that he had taken on "Hollywood and the media élite." This produced a roar from the crowd. (The film that preceded his speech showed him, his chest puffed out like a pouter pigeon's, proclaiming to a meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Indianapolis in June, "I wear their scorn as a badge of honor." Sometimes when this news clip has been replayed, it shows Quayle immediately breaking into a grin, as if he knows that it's all a game.) Quayle delivered his acceptance speech with energy and force, and the speech was strong in its attacks on enemies and on Clinton and the Democratic Congress (which he, like Bush, tried to link). Like other speakers, he used the word "slick"—getting in a gibe at Clinton. ("Inhale" was another popular word at the Convention.) He made the obligatory joke on himself about spelling, and trotted out the now tired Lloyd Bentsen formulation, first used on himself, of "I know So-and-So." (Reagan had used it Monday night.) But, for all its forcefulness, the speech didn't make him more substantial.

THE general approach in Bush's speech—that he had been consumed during the first three and a half years of his Presidency with foreign policy, dealing with unique opportunities to end the nuclear nightmare and promote freedom, and would now be able to devote the same energy to domestic issues—was foreshadowed in Baker's farewell speech to the State Department. But it doesn't quite square with reality: Bush also took a while to get positively engaged in foreign affairs—the first several months were devoted

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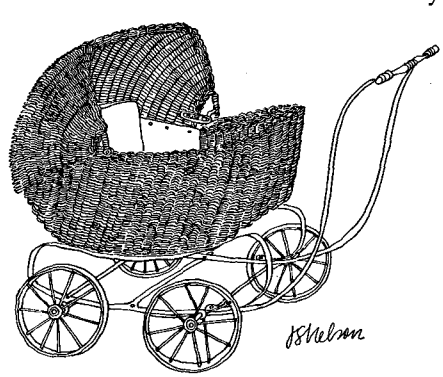
to a study of foreign policy which came up with the unremarkable and murky policy toward the Soviet Union of "status quo plus." And Bush did spend a fair amount of time on domestic policy—just not very effectively—and in his speech he both castigated the Congress for not passing his programs and took credit for what legislative achievements there had been.

Bush's speech was given a terrific buildup—the press cliché was that it was "the speech of his life"—but one has to take Bush speeches in context. This wouldn't be the first time we saw him get all worked up, speaking more forcefully than usual and sounding in charge—and not following through. In his Houston speech, Bush was in what he terms his "campaign mode," and he came on strong.

He had clearly been psyched up and well coached (his old adviser Roger Ailes had returned to help out), and it was something of a relief to see the vigorous Bush instead of the listless one we had seen much of this year. His explanation that he had had to spend his time on foreign policy was well written and delivered—even if he took no notice of the role played by the Russians and the Czechs and other peoples and some brave leaders in the dramatic events of the last few years, and left out his own initial passivity. He took several shots at Clinton, some of them of a personal nature—and of the kind that Bush, a major whiner, would have complained about mightily had they been taken at him. Bush and others complain that the Democrats had been attacking him for months while he wasn't yet in his "campaign mode," but Bush hadn't forborne making his own attacks on the Democrats—if not so sharply on Clinton personally. In any case, the Democrats' gibes in New York against Bush were tough but weren't so personal.

Clinton was vulnerable, and some of the President's gibes hit home, as when he mocked Clinton's elaborate ambiguity on what his position would have been on the vote on whether to go to war in the Persian Gulf or give sanctions more time. Bush prefaced this with the effective line "Well, I bit the bullet and he bit his nails." He referred to a road sign Clinton might have seen on his bus tours, "Slippery when wet." Dramatically, Bush spoke of his willingness to join up for the Second World War, and the implication was obvious. Then he asked the question he has been asking since, and which his campaign advisers hope the election may turn on: "Who do you trust to make change work for you?" (Teeter says, "Every Presidential election comes down in October to the question of trust.") Bush's attacks on the Congress were frequent—and redundant—and on occasion he slipped into his Clint Eastwood mode. He tried to link Clinton with what he terms the "gridlock Democratic Congress."

Bush's proposed "across the board" tax cut had been signalled by Baker, and the decision had been made to keep the tax cut generic and unexplained, for fear of getting into a public wrangle over what the effect of this or that tax cut would be and what it would cost—and how it would be paid for. The important point, Bush advisers say, is that the speech set out Bush as someone who wanted to cut taxes and shrink government, while Clinton wanted to do the opposite. Clinton's economic plan, released on June 21st, was vulnerable, because it used the old trick of projecting a high rate of economic growth to pay for his various proposals, as well as tax increases on those earning over two hundred thousand dollars and on foreign corporations. The Bush people argue that Clinton's plan was issued when everyone thought there was a three-man race, and the Clinton people tipped their plan in the direction of the Democratic liberal, urban base—and they have a point. A Republican Convention planner said to me, "We're going to take that plan and hang it around his neck." But the Bush people, and Bush himself, also distorted Clinton's plan, as well as his record on taxation as governor of Arkansas. Bush's second major economic proposal, to allow taxpayers to check off on their tax returns whether they want to devote up to ten per cent of their taxes to deficit reduction—also to be offset by unspecified budget cuts—was aimed, though perhaps too subtly, at Perot supporters. An Administration official said to me after the Convention, "Didn't that sound Perotian? 'Let the people decide.' " This gimmicky proposal had been opposed by the Treasury Department not long before.



But when it came to setting out his sense of where the country is economically, and of what is bothering people, Bush seemed in a hurry. He ran quickly through a litany of things he wanted to accomplish as if running through a grocery list. Bush just doesn't do very well when dealing with domestic concerns (though this was an improvement over his saying in New Hampshire, "Message: I care"). He has had opportunity after opportunity to craft a coherent and relevant domestic agenda, and he has always come up short. (Though Bush had firmly instructed his speechwriters that he wanted his acceptance speech to be briefer than Clinton's, it went on even longer.) Still, his advisers feel that he succeeded in stating the differences between himself and Clinton in stark terms and in sowing, or reinforcing, doubts about Clinton's character. They were delighted when Clinton subsequently criticized the tax cut as "fool's gold."

THE President continued his efforts to nail down the base in the days immediately following the Convention, appearing first in Mississippi and then in other Southern states, in border states, and in Texas. The white Evangelical and born-again Christian voters still hadn't returned to Bush in large enough numbers, according to campaign officials. (On the Sunday before the Convention, the Houston *Post* bannered a poll showing Clinton ahead of Bush in his adopted state by seventeen points—a foreboding of a deep humiliation for Bush.) The plan is to secure the base, sew up the Southern and Rocky Mountain states early, and then fight over California and the industrial states of Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania—the states that Presidential elections usually come down to. Since the polls show Clinton running far stronger than Bush in California, unless things turn around there Bush will have to win a minimum of three of the five industrial states. (The Democrats, it is generally agreed, can't win without California.) This is a tall order, and

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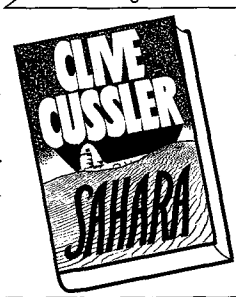

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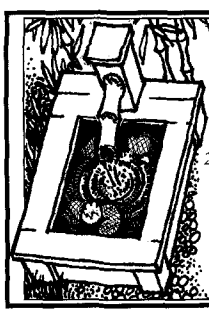

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it can't be assumed that all the states in the South and the West that have been going Republican will do so again this year.

In his appearances, Bush gave mini-summaries of his Convention speech, stressing that he is for smaller government and less spending, while his opponent is for the opposite, and he continued to misrepresent Clinton's proposals. But he also clung to the "values" issue, telling the Religious Roundtable in Dallas that he was struck by the fact that the Democrats didn't have the word "God" in their platform. (In New Jersey, on Monday, he proposed a broadened job-training program but, in keeping with his Convention proposals, wouldn't specify how it would be paid for.) The new White House team, headed by Baker, is proud of the fact that it can make and execute decisions "on a dime"—as evidenced by getting Bush to Florida on Monday, to show sympathy for the victims of that day's powerful hurricane. (Florida is a very important state for Bush.) Bush was also dispatched to Louisiana—also hit by the hurricane (and a toss-up state). A Baker associate says, of their predecessors, "It took them a week to get him to Los Angeles following the riots." (But the initial federal response to the devastated areas was inadequate and ineffective, and Bush finally put the Defense Department on the job. This wasn't our first hurricane, or first inadequate response.)

The President's announcement yesterday that the allies were imposing a "no-fly zone" in southern Iraq, to prevent the Iraqi military from using fixed-wing aircraft, in defiance of one of the U.N. resolutions, to harass the Shiites was no surprise. One way or another, the Administration had been gearing for showdowns with Saddam Hussein, whose remaining in power sticks in Bush's craw and is a minus in his foreign-policy record (even if Bush did do the right thing by not pursuing the fight to Baghdad). Earlier this summer, we had come close to a showdown over Hussein's balking at letting U.N. inspection teams search certain buildings for information on forbidden weapons of mass destruction. There were plans for some sort of punitive bombing, to impose a cost, if not to get Hussein to relent (this could have got us into an open-ended operation). The first near-showdown ended in an unseemly compromise (no Americans were allowed in the building at issue). Then a recent plan for such an operation was called off after the New York *Times*, on the eve of the Convention, printed a story that such a confrontation was imminent and that there was some speculation within the government that the action was designed to boost the President's ratings. Outraged Administration officials condemned the story—but didn't deny that such an operation had been under consideration—and officials now say that the U.N. called off the challenge because it had been compromised by the news story. Officials insist that the Administration only makes recommendations to the U.N. inspection team and are incensed at suggestions that the Bush team might be manipulating events in Iraq in order to help the President's standing. In his statement yesterday, Bush explicitly denied that the purpose of the "no-fly zone" policy was—as had been speculated in the press—to encourage the dismemberment of Iraq, but an official says that if it has the added benefit of convincing key Iraqis that as long as Hussein is in power Iraq's sovereignty might be eroded (the Kurds in the north are also being protected from Iraqi air attacks), so much the better. The Administration didn't used to be very interested in the Shiites (who have been taking a beating for many months, and who the Administration used to worry would link up with Iran), and seems to be picking and choosing which of Hussein's violations call for strong action. The actions that the Administration is taking may have their own logic, but it's hard to believe that the efforts to pressure Hussein out of office have nothing to do with how much his removal would benefit the President.

THE political coalition Ronald Reagan put together is cracking—as a result of time, Bush's lack of skills, and its internal contradictions. Polls taken since the Convention indicate that Bush didn't get much of a "bounce," and his advisers are now telling the press (in an effort to change the subject) that maybe the Convention's stress on "family values," rather than on jobs and the economy, didn't go over well with the needed suburban and independent voters. The wonder is that people who are proposing to run the country for another four years didn't think of this sooner.

—ELIZABETH DREW

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BOOKS

BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

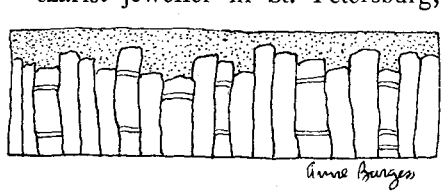
CROSSING BLOOD, by Nanci Kincaid (Putnam; $21.95). It is a truism that bigoted Southern whites have a closer and more convivial relationship with their black neighbors than most liberal Northern whites manage to achieve. In the early nineteen-sixties, the white Conyers family moves to the edge of French Town, as Tallahassee's black neighborhood is called. The prolific mother of the black family next door comes to work as their maid, and the children of the two households play together and try to impress each other. But they are not allowed to enter each other's houses—though Lucy Conyers and her two brothers beg to do so. When Martin Luther King begins appearing on TV, to the delight of Lucy's mother, and Lucy's stepfather comes out for George Wallace, it is clear that the stage is being set for a grand conflict and crisis. Lucy's confiding narrative voice flattens as the mechanisms of conventional drama grind into action, but the drama of paradox that has prevailed—of loving individual black people without questioning their inferiority as a race—remains animating and disturbing.

SEA LEVEL, by Roger King (Poseidon; $20). This dense, fully conceived novel is about Bill Bender, a foreign-aid consultant who is at work in a remote Himalayan valley when he learns of his father's death back in England. As he bushwhacks through a complex schedule of meetings and road trips, his ongoing mental narrative takes us through his slightly stifling middle-class childhood, the exhilaration and difficulty of marriage above his station, and an equally complicated affair with his Chinese ex-assistant. As he puzzles over the financial and emotional politics of his relationships, he begins, haltingly, to grieve for his father—a milkman who was kind to his wife, went to church, and wanted better for his son. On top of it all, Bill is compiling this multilayered account as he sits under a palm umbrella on the Polynesian island of Ruatua, where he is playing father, after a fashion, to the children of his newest love. With his beard grown out and a legal pad on his lap, the economist has become a writer—and beneath his scrupulous, insightful report on himself one senses the impressive breadth and depth of Mr. King's intelligence.

GENERAL

MARCHING IN PLACE: THE STATUS QUO PRESIDENCY OF GEORGE BUSH, by Michael Duffy and Dan Goodgame (Simon & Schuster; $23). A readable and thoughtful book, by *Time's* White House correspondents, that gives the President his due. They portray his massing of the alliance against Saddam Hussein as a masterwork of diplomacy, and explain why he didn't encourage the dismemberment of Iraq or the break-up of the Soviet empire—because he feels that in a world strewn with nuclear weapons instability is a threat. But they also maintain that Bush's essentially negative or defensive view of change reflects his commitment to protect what he himself has had in a life of almost unparalleled economic security. Bush is convinced that our system is fine as it is, and is unable to grasp that a number of changes—including the present recession—have brought hardship to working Americans, let alone the unemployed. But, of course, Bush hasn't run his Presidency for working Americans. As for the man personally, the authors detect in him "a gritty ruthlessness and will to power" that have made him do "whatever he thought was necessary to win."

SKY: MEMOIRS, by Blaise Cendrars, translated from the French by Nina Rootes (Paragon House; $22.95). The poet Blaise Cendrars (1887-1961), a colleague of Apollinaire and friend of Delaunay, Cocteau, and Léger, ran away from home at sixteen to become an assistant to a czarist jeweller in St. Petersburg, joined the Foreign Legion, lost an arm in the First World War, and worked as a journalist in the Second until he had to go into hiding from the Gestapo. This is the fourth and last volume of his highly romanticized autobiography—a recounting of his role in what he calls "the great farce that is human life on earth." At first, the book seems a hodgepodge of memories (the Russian Revolution of 1905, a sojourn with a loony recluse at his fazenda in the Brazilian interior) mixed with digressions (on levitation as practiced by Catholic saints, the natural history of the hummingbird). But it is held together by the unique voice of the author, by his gallows wit, and by his astonishing lyrical gift.



THE BLACK MAN'S BURDEN: AFRICA AND THE CURSE OF THE NATION-STATE, by Basil Davidson (Times; $24). This British journalist and historian, who has made a lifetime study of Africa, began his career intending to specialize in Eastern Europe. Here he draws on his expertise in both areas to compare the disasters that have been visited on their populations by the adoption of a Western European institution that doesn't fit local conditions—the nation-state. Mr. Davidson's small book is startlingly prescient; it seems to have been written out of next week's headlines. He explains that both African and Eastern European intellectuals of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were so dazzled by the success of Western nation-states that they neglected to explore the needs and gifts of their own peoples. His assault on the nation-state occasionally goes too far, and his pleasure in ethnic—particularly linguistic—diversity sometimes overlooks our need for swift and wide communication. But most of the time his political imagination and insight stimulate the reader's own thinking.

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